INTRODUCTION

> There is no question of dealing finally with the matter, because, in so far as people are always reading an author, he is always being read differently. (Empson 1973, 282)

How does a text talk, and how does a reader read? Is it possible to read a text wrongly? Can anything objectively true be said about a given text? What is the relationship between a text and the world? These are some of the questions informing this study of contemporary Indonesian literature. It is a study that had its genesis in a broader engagement with cultural relativism, in particular the application of the principles of cultural relativism to cross-cultural literary studies.

Cultural relativism is a concept that developed in anthropology in acknowledgment of the fact that all cultures are orderly systems within which customs and institutions are rational in their own terms. Customs and behaviour that are considered sinful in one culture, for example, may be totally acceptable in another. This gives rise to ethical relativism, which maintains that there is no one correct moral code for all times and all peoples, that each group has its own morality relative to its wants and values, and that all moral ideas are necessarily relative to a particular culture. The principles of cultural and ethical relativism may be seen as informing the debates of the early 1990s about so-called "Asian values"[1], which were predicated on notions such as the rejection of the idea of an absolute concept of human rights: in the relativist view, rights are culturally specific, a matter of national

[1] See for example Milner and Quilty 1996

sovereignty. Gellner (1992, 29), calls this 'a kind of hysteria of subjectivity', a remark which points to the link between relativist thought and the subjectivity and fragmentation commonly associated with the condition of postmodernity.

Although my interest in cultural relativism was originally inspired by a concern with ethical issues such as human rights, it assumed a different and somewhat sharper focus in the early 1980s when, reading the Indonesian "contextual literature" (*sastra kontekstual)* debates, I became keenly aware of my status as a non-Indonesian critic offering commentary on literature written in Indonesian by Indonesian writers. The "global" questions posited above were thus generated by more "local" concerns such as: What can an Indonesian text say to a non-Indonesian reader? How can a non-Indonesian reader read an Indonesian text? These questions led me to an examination of some of the issues of interpretation and of reader-response theory, as they pertained to the "global" questions posited above. In the process I engaged with the idea of "meaning" being ultimately a relative notion; relativism thus became a significant guiding principle in my thinking.

However, the problem with relativism is that it inevitably leads to an abyss. At its most extreme, it leads to the conclusion that the only knowable thing about human experience is that it is unknowable. Moreover, if there is no right or wrong that can be determined apart from the conventions of one's own culture, the question arises of what ought to be done when different cultures come into contact. When assessing a work of literature, for example, do I use the conventional criteria of my own culture, or attempt to judge it from the perspective of the culture within which it was written? Questions of this nature are being foregrounded as the process of globalisation erases or at least diminishes national boundaries.

At its most extreme an appeal to relativism would appear to be unproductive when addressing some of the fundamental dilemmas of the cross-cultural literary critic. In the end s/he would be painted into a corner with nowhere to go and nothing that is sayable. Nevertheless, this thesis remains predicated upon a relativist approach. For it is in its applicability to the very process of reading, the

process of producing meaning(s) from a given text, rather than to the interrogation of one's role as "literary critic", that I discovered the validity and fruitfulness of relativism. Critics like Iser and Fish maintain that the act of reading involves a process of relativising the text to the assumptions, expectations and experience of the reader. This view holds that a given "text" becomes a literary work only when it interacts with a reader. Each reader being different from all other readers, a given text then potentially contains a multitude of different literary works. It is a notion which is cleverly exemplified in Crews' satirical work *The Pooh perplex,* which presents twelve competing readings of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, each of which is “true” in that it complies with the philosophy and/or theoretical standpoint of its “author”. (Crews in fact writes each of the essays.) Crews succeeds in exposing the “truth” as a construct of the reader, yet at the same time each interpretation of the story remains highly convincing.

Easthope too (1991) demonstrates that different readings privilege different features of a text. He identifies as many as fifteen different ways of reading a text: a Marxist reading, for example, privileges different features than those highlighted by a formalist literary reading, which differs again from a psycho-analytic reading. There is, then, a close relationship between ideology and specific reading practices. It should be stressed, however, that some texts encourage a certain reading practice at the expense of another: what Eco (1990, 21) calls 'contextual pressure' will affect the strategies adopted by the reader for interpreting a given text. A novel about the struggles of an oppressed people, for example, will encourage a Marxist reading, while discouraging an approach that would seek to foreground or highlight any mythical or non-realistic elements.

As well as the limits imposed by 'contextual pressure', the ways of approaching a text are also constrained by a given reader's expectations, which are shaped by his/her previous experience. A reader of English will approach a work by Milton differently from one by Joyce, for example. As a reader of Indonesian

literature, I would approach a novel by Putu Wijaya with different expectations than I would have when reading Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

Furthermore, authorial intention presents an additional constraint upon possible interpretations of the works under consideration in this thesis. The three writers whose works are represented in this thesis - Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Y.B. Mangunwijaya and Putu Wijaya - have all spoken and written about their creative impetus and, to differing degrees, about the aesthetic and/or material premises of their novels. While I disavow the notion that authorial intention *per se* produces the literary work, I nonetheless acknowledge that my readings of these novels are to some extent shaped by my awareness of the authorial voice that speaks not only within the text, but through the material presence of the author as an historical actor who is external to it.

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The *sastra kontekstual* debates of the early 1980s in Indonesia revived a familiar and seemingly cyclic debate, namely the place of social commitment in literature and the arts and the role of literature in contributing to or reflecting the development of an "authentic" national identity. It was at this time also that two of Indonesia's most prominent writers produced arguably their most significant works of fiction. Pramoedya Ananta Toer, just released from fourteen years political imprisonment, published the first two novels in his tetralogy (often referred to as the 'Buru Quartet' because they were initially composed orally during Pramoedya's imprisonment on the prison island of Buru). The novels were *Bumi manusia* and *Anak semua bangsa* (1980), which were subsequently followed by *Jejak langkah* (1985) and *Rumah kaca* (1988). In 1981 Y.B. Mangunwijaya, a prominent Catholic priest, social activist and writer on cultural and public affairs, released his novel *Burung-burung manyar*. These novels were perhaps the first in Indonesian to address the notion that the past can be used to explain the present, and in the process to deconstruct, albeit in fictional form, many aspects of twentieth century Indonesian

history. As such they are "grand narratives of nation", narratives which address, not uncontroversially, the “big themes” of nation-building. Mangunwijaya subsequently wrote two more “narratives of natio”", *Durga Umayi* (1991) and *Burung-burung rantau* (1993) which, although markedly different in tone and style, both from *Burung-burung manyar* and from each other, nonetheless 'share but one protagonist, namely the Indonesian nation.[1] (Mangunwijaya, 1997b, 56)

Around the same time as these novels were being published there developed a strong counter-discourse to the rationalism, empiricism and historical fact which underpinned the narratives of nation. This counter-discourse found expression in the "anti-intellectual" novels of Putu Wijaya which focus on the minutiae of human existence and which may aptly be termed "petit narratives". Wijaya coined the term *sastra teror* ('the literature of terror') for this type of anti-intellectual discourse, manifested in his novels *Sobat* (1981), *Perang* (1990), *Teror* (1991), *Kroco* (1995) and *Byar pet* (1995).

These twelve novels provide the core material for the discussion presented in this thesis. My purpose is to analyse the meanings produced by these texts when they are read according to differing interpretive strategies. The questions that are addressed include, What meanings can be construed from what these writers have written? What sort of literary works can be constructed from these texts?

The meanings of each text are variously concretised by the reader, as Iser would have it, but by a reader in this case armed with various sets of consciously adopted interpretive strategies. These varying interpretations transcend notions of cultural relativism: meaning is produced not solely by the cultural context of a literary work but by an interaction between the interpretive stance of myself as reader and the text. Both the interpretive stance and the text itself may or may not engage directly with the cultural context in which the work was written. The text, however, is taken to be a creation of a particular author, and the authorial voice in turn has some influence on the choice of interpretive stances.

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[1] punya tokoh satu, yakni *nasion* Indonesia

I make no attempt to argue for a "true", "correct" or "preferred" reading of any of these novels. Rather, it is my contention that, while authorial intention inevitably determines the structure of a text, and while the text itself constrains the types of reading which are plausible and possible, applying different theoretical models to the reading of that text will privilege different features and produce different meanings - or, as Fish proposes, different 'literary works'.

CHAPTER ONE

ISSUES IN INTERPRETATION

> (W)hat is inherent in the text is a range of possibilities of meaning. Texts, in other words, are plural, open to a number of interpretations. Meanings are not fixed or given, but are released in the process of reading, and criticism is concerned with the range of possible readings. (Belsey 1994, 19-20)

Notions of relativity of meaning in a text have their basis in a rich body of work in the area of reader-response theory (what Belsey {1994, 29} calls 'reader-power'). Although varied in focus and critical positions, approaches based on this theory have in common the questioning of the objectivity of the text. What this means in practice is a re-appraisal and a re-ordering of the roles of author, reader and text in the process of "creating" a literary work. Where formerly a given text was regarded as a product of its author, and hence in a significant sense the author's "property", the critical approach of 'reader-power' is to reject the notion of the author as the guardian of meaning in a text. In short, the text is freed from the 'tyranny of the author'. (Belsey, 1994, 27)

It should be pointed out that there is not necessarily a general agreement on what "meaning" is. Hirsch, for example, who deplores the 'assault on the sensible belief that a text means what its author meant', maintains that "meaning" is what the signs of the text represent; "significance" on the other hand describes the relationship between that meaning and a person (such as the reader). For Hirsch, it is the significance of a text that is potentially plural, not the meaning. (1967, 8) Later

critics, like Belsey (1994), conceptualise "interpretation" as a tool for producing "meaning". The meaning of a text thus depends on the mode of interpretation and "meaning" is not a totalising norm against which a given interpretation must be measured.

Hirsch's use of the words "meaning" and "interpretation" is predicated upon an understanding of "meaning" as fixed and unalterable. Different "interpretations" may be made of that essentialised meaning but the validity of a given interpretation of a text must be measured against the text's meaning:

> (T)here is clearly a sense in which we can neither evaluate a text nor determine what it means "to us, today" until we have correctly apprehended what it means. (Hirsch 1967, 209)

It is a view reinforced by Juhl (1980, 12) who unambiguously maintains that 'a statement about the meaning of a work *is* a statement about the author's intention.' Juhl's book *Interpretation* sets out to show that, given more than one linguistically possible interpretation of a text, only one can be correct and that the correct reading follows a direct line to the author's intention. What the author meant, claims Juhl (47), 'disambiguates' an utterance.

Opposed to the "intentionalist" critics like Hirsch and Juhl are the "anti-intentionalists", whose case was first presented in Wimsatt and Beardsley's 1946 essay 'The intentional fallacy'.[1] While this view does not purport to completely discount the influence of authorial intention on the reading process, it does argue that the meaning of a literary work is not necessarily what the author intended it to be. The "achieved meaning" of a text, even if it were universally accepted, is not necessarily the intended meaning of the author.

In his important essay 'The death of the author', Barthes (1968) stressed the idea of the literary text as an autonomous entity, free of authorial intention and resistant to a unified reading. The death of the author, for Barthes, implies the birth of the reader. He maintained that any attempt to decipher a text,

[1] Reprinted in Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954, 3-18

once the author is removed, is futile, and he advocates a free-play of meanings. Barthes's position was an unlicensed, somewhat hedonistic post-structuralism, which was modified by other critics, the most well-known of whom was Derrida.

Derrida's starting point, in his 1966 lecture 'Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human sciences' was that in the twentieth century man has ceased to be the measure of all things. The resulting "decentredness" means that we live in a relativistic universe, in which there is no fixed centre. There are no "facts", merely "interpretations" and nowhere to appeal for validation of those interpretations. Derrida claimed that at the moment a text is written, its author abandons it to its 'essential drift'. This means that it henceforth lacks both the subject of writing and a designated referent and that therefore it has no objective or literal linguistic meaning. Although a deconstructive reading, as advocated by Derrida, is a form of harassment of the text, Derrida himself shuns arbitrariness. Rather, he claims that a deconstructive reading does have a purpose: it 'attempts to make the not-seen accessible to sight'. (Derrida 1976, 163)

Reader-response theories represent a challenge to the orthodoxy of the expressive realists who privilege the mimetic role of art. For the expressive realists art is an imitation of reality, and literary interpretation has an expository function. "Authenticity" is the mark of a good novel, as suggested in Iris Murdoch's claim (1977, 83) that 'bad art is a lie about the world, and what is by contrast seen as good is in some important evident sense seen as *ipso facto* true and expressive of reality.' Leavis admired most those novels in which the "real world" is most vividly portrayed, and he linked the author and his/her text so closely that, as Belsey (1994, 12) points out, a novelist's 'literary inadequacies are seen as a direct expression of his personal inadequacies.' Reception theory argues, on the other hand, that truth to life is not a universal criterion of literary greatness but rather, as Jauss puts it (1974, 26), 'a value which characterises the period of humanism'. In Jauss's view, the mimetic theory has now lost its authority.

The privileging of the reader in the process of constructing meaning in a text began in the 1950s. Gibson (1950), for example, introduced the notion of the 'mock reader'. His starting point was the formalist idea that a distinction must be made between the author of a literary work and the fictitious 'speaker' within the work - what Booth (1961, 70-71) called the 'implied author' and what Hirsch (1967, 242) called the 'speaking subject'. The novelist or poet communicates with the reader through this "speaker". Gibson took the idea of the "fictitious speaker" further by maintaining that the "real reader", too, is elusive and mysterious. In his view the "real reader" is displaced in the act of reading by a 'mock reader', who is created by the language of the text. By my understanding the 'mock reader' is the "implied" or "ideal" reader to whom the "speaker" speaks. While reading the text, the 'mock reader' assumes the attitudes and qualities that the language of the text asks him or her to take on. The mock reader thus relies upon the text for his or her existence and as such is distinguished from the "real" reader. The relationship between the text and the 'mock reader' is thus a part of the literary artefact.

For Gibson, then, the text itself remained the most significant element of the reading process. His work did, however, foreground the role of the reader, a notion that paved the way for critics like Riffaterre (1966) who assigned a more central function to the reader as the creator of "meaning". Riffaterre maintained that the response of the reader to a text is a vital element in the construction of literary "meaning". He opposed the phonology- and grammar-oriented structuralist position on the grounds that the reader is often quite unaware of the existence of phonology and grammar. After examining Jakobson and Levi-Strauss's analysis of Baudelaire's poem *Les Chats*, Riffaterre points out that such a structuralist analysis cannot explain what it is that establishes contact between the poem and the reader, what it is that makes the poem "click" with a particular reader (and not, presumably, with others). Grammatical analysis, Riffaterre maintained, can provide no more than the grammar of the poem. He preferred to demonstrate the poetic significance of the poem by focussing on the emotional and intellectual responses of the reader.

Although his departure from structuralism allowed for a more subjective reading of the poem, Riffaterre's approach remained text-centred. While the reader's response may indicate the presence of poetic meaning, rather than grammaticality, in Riffaterre's view that poetic meaning remains an intrinsic element of the objective text, waiting to be uncovered as it were, rather than something which is constituted by the reader. The role of the reader is thus like a trigger; it sparks off the "meaning" that is already lying dormant in the text. A trigger is of no use if there is nothing to spark off.

In the late 1950s the Geneva School of phenomenological criticism, led by Poulet, gained considerable prestige. Poulet declared that books could only take their full existence in the reader: the act of reading transforms the reader into the subject that does the thinking. This process requires both that the life-story of the author be shut out of the work and that the individual disposition of the reader be shut out of the act of reading. (Iser 1972, 226) For Poulet, therefore, readers are essentially passive - they forget themselves 'in order that the text may live'. (Tompkins 1980, xiv-xv)

For Iser (1972, 212) on the other hand, the reader actively participates in the production of a text's meaning - the concretisation of a text requires the reader's imagination to come into play.[1] Iser argues that the focus of literary criticism should not be the meaning of a text, but rather its effect. He and his colleague Jauss gave the name 'reception-theory' (*rezeption-aesthetik*) to their particular school of criticism. *Rezeption-aesthetik*, like deconstruction, disavows the notion of the objective literary work. Jauss (1974, 14) claims that 'a literary work is not an object which stands by itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period.'

However, *rezeption-aesthetik* maintains that the text's intentions are already present in the work; the text is thus not solely a fabrication of the reader. Iser explains that the role of the reader is to uncover, through the interplay between

[1] The term "concretise" derives from Roman Ingarden's use of the word *konkretisiert* (realised).

deduction and induction, the unformulated part of a literary work, to reveal the unwritten part of it ('the figure in the carpet'). This process is also alluded to by Hirsch (1967, 221), who concedes that the 'whole meaning' of a text 'is not explicitly present to consciousness'. Hirsch maintains, however, that the implicit meanings (Iser's 'unwritten parts') must accord with the author's overall intention. In Hirsch's view, the reader's 'accidental associations' must be excluded if they do not concur with the 'author's horizon'.

The phenomenological approach stressed the need to give equal weight to both the actual text and the actions involved in responding to the text. The "literary work" lies halfway between the "text" (the artistic creation of the author) and the "realisation of the text" (the aesthetic response of the reader). The literary work is thus not the same as the text; nor, however, is it the same as the reader's realisation of the text. It relies on both for its existence. The "unwritten" part of the text, which is realised by the reader, influences the effect of the written part upon him or her. This then leads to different "concretisations" of the same text and thus to different literary works being created from the same text by different readers. The text is essentially inexhaustible. (As Hirsch suggests {somewhat contemptuously}, the result is 'as many meanings as readers'. {1967, 213})

Its stress on "text" and "reader" notwithstanding, the phenomenological approach also assigns to the author a significant role in contributing to the realisation of the text. Drawing on Laurence Sterne's (much earlier) comment that the role of the author is to leave the reader 'something to imagine', Iser points out that the author must ensure that the text engages the reader in the creative process but does not push him or her too far: 'boredom and overstrain form the boundaries beyond which the reader will leave the field of play'. Iser also concurs with Dewey that a beholder's 'creation must include relations comparable to those which the original producer underwent.' (Iser 1972, 213)

In Iser's view, then, the meaning of a text is not given but nor is it arbitrary. While the textual structure guides the reader towards a certain meaning, it

is a meaning that is 'neither a given external reality nor a copy of an intended reader's own world: it is something that has to be ideated by the mind of the reader.' (Iser 1978, 38)

While Iser maintains that the reader's position is 'manipulated by the text' (1978, 152), Fish (1976) distances himself from notions of a "given" text. While previous critics had allowed that the process of reading is instrumental to the uncovering of the unformulated parts of an objectively existing text, Fish denies the very existence of an objective text existing independently of the reader.

Fish's article of faith is that a reader does not "simply" read in a pure, disinterested way; s/he proceeds on the basis of a number of decisions which shape the way in which s/he reads and thus shape the text. As Davis points out (1978, 89), 'perception is never unmediated.' Davis suggests too (1978, 168) that 'pluralism in general is based on the recognition that we can only know what our method enables us to know.'

What I find most useful in Fish's analysis is his foregrounding of the fact that reading is never simple and never pure. Readers do not approach a given text with a vacuum in their head: they bring with them a wealth of expectations, assumptions and experience. These may be ideological - consciously adopted 'interpretive strategies', as illustrated below - or they may be constitutive of each reader's own unique, essentially subconscious, "reader's baggage". This includes what Slatoff (1970, 35) calls an individual's unique 'nature, experience, training, temperament, values, biases, or motive for reading', as well as the expectations readers have of a text based on their response to the title, to the cover illustration, to published critical response to the work, to their prior knowledge of the author and/or the publishing company. "Reader's baggage" can include things as seemingly trite as a response to the font size and the length of the text. As Hirsch succinctly puts it (1967, 140):

> In practice we are always relating our understanding to something else - to ourselves, to our relevant knowledge, to the author's personality, to other, similar works. Usually we cannot even understand a text

> without perceiving such relationships, for we cannot artificially isolate the act of construing verbal meaning from all those other acts, perceptions, associations, and judgments which accompany that act and which are instrumental in leading us to perform it.

Hirsch, however, argues that such extrinsic data should be "read out" of the text, not "counted" as part of the process of constructing meaning. This is a notion I find unrealistic. Such data is a significant part of the reading process and it can neither be isolated nor eliminated. It precludes the possibility of an "innocent" reading, one unmediated by the reader's experience of other texts and other literary genres. (Hirsch {1967, 142} in fact acknowledges this when he speaks of the reader being 'enslaved...by whatever reality it is to which we have chosen to relate {the author's} work.')

The reader is also influenced by what Hobsbaum (1970, 47f) calls the concept of 'availability'. Because the entire text cannot be "available" to a reader at a given point of time, s/he compensates for this by interpolating 'habitual and extraneous standards'. As Iser points out (1978, 17), this ultimately characterises the reader more than it does the text itself. Much of the "meaning" of the text is thus the reader's projection rather than something intrinsic in the text.

Fish represents a challenge to that of the New Critics, who privileged the text over both the author and the reader in their insistence that the meaning of the text was to be found in the words on the page.[1] To illustrate his claim that interpretive decisions produce the "text", Fish discusses the way in which most readers would read Milton's poem *Lycidas*[2]. This reading involves the adoption of at least two interpretive decisions: first, that it is a pastoral and second, that it was written by Milton.[3] These interpretive decisions then predispose the reader to look

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[1] The New Critics valued above all harmony among the elements of a work. Iser (1978, 15) maintains that 'harmonisation and the eventual removal of ambiguities' is 'the unacknowledged debt of New Criticism to the classical norm of interpretation.'

[2] Written in 1638, *Lycidas* is a monody, a poem in which the writer laments the death of another. Milton's commentary on it goes, 'In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drown'd in his Passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637. And by occasion foretels the ruine of our corrupted Clergy then in their height.' (Auden and Pearson n.d., 12)

[3] A pastoral is a poem or play dealing with the life of shepherds or simply rural life in general.

for certain themes and to confer significances on certain elements. (For example, because the reader has decided that it is a pastoral, flowers, streams, shepherds and pagan deities take on certain meanings.) The interpretive strategy (which is adopted prior to beginning to read) thus produces the literary work (which Fish calls the 'text'.) A different literary work ('text') could be produced from *Lycidas* by a reader using a different set of interpretive decisions (deciding that the work was a fantasy, for example). Thus, in Fish's view, different sets of interpretive strategies, even when adopted by the same reader, produce different texts. Two people who "agree about" a literary work, in Fish's view are in fact simply adopting the same interpretive strategies and thus "writing" the same work. Agreement about "meaning", in other words, has nothing to do with authorial intention, nor does it imply that "meaning" is fixed. In Fish's view, two people reading with different sets of interpretive strategies will in fact "write" different "texts".

Fish's notion of interpretive decisions stands between the idea of a text as being objectively knowable and that of it being completely unknowable. It rescues literary interpretation from the abyss of relativism, from what Iser (1978, 23) calls 'uncontrolled subjectivism'. Fish allows that "communities" of readers may share linguistic and cognitive coherence and thus, armed with the same interpretive strategies, will read (or to use his term, 'write' - which I understand to mean "create") a work in roughly the same way.

Once the objectivity of the text is questioned and it is allowed that the text is completed by the reader, relativised to his/her interpretive strategy, the plurality of a work's meaning becomes ‘fundamental’. (Fowler 1982, 265) This of course is unacceptable to many critics. Hirsch, for one, would insist that it is interpretations, not meanings, that are plural, and would argue for a sustained search for the real meaning of a work, which ultimately resides with the author. Davis (1978, 90) maintains that an acceptance of plurality means that critical discourse is

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As Fish points out, neither "pastoral" nor "Milton" stand for objective, indisputable facts. (Otherwise there would be no need for the large body of work on both concepts.)

little more than 'an atomistic collection of commonplaces held together by severely abstract and subsumptive conceptions of the critical mind or “sensibility” of distinct ages.' Davis's project, however, is a search for the "concrete universal". He speaks of the need to 'resolve the conflict of interpretations'. For the reasons outlined above - the impossibility of unmediated reading, and the often unconscious relativising of a text to a reader's own experience - I regard Davis's search for a pure philosophical base of critical discourse as unrealistic, along with Hirsch's idealistic search for the "real meaning" of a text. As Iser maintains (1978, 3), the search for "meaning" can be neither natural nor unconditioned. I adopt pluralism as a *sine qua non*, rather than regard it as a problematic to be resolved.

The Limits of Interpretation

The early critics in the field of reader-response theory - in particular Hirsch, Iser and Fish - were part of a 1970s reaction to New Criticism whose proponents privileged the words on the page in their search for literary meaning. The views of these 1970s critics were later picked up on by other thinkers in the field of literary interpretation, whose ideas were informed by New Historicist and deconstructionist thinking. It is these 1990s critics who have helped shape and modify my approach in this thesis. In particular I have drawn upon Eco, Belsey and Easthope in order to establish the limits of interpretation. While my initial debt is to Fish, I do not set out to advocate an "unlimited semiosis". There are, I believe, constraints upon the types of possible readings which can be made of a given text. At the very least, the literal sense of a text must be taken into account - what Eco (1990, 36) calls the 'zero-degree meaning, the one authorised by the dullest and the simplest of the existing dictionaries.' My thinking has been shaped by Eco's argument (1990, 41) that acts of freedom on the part of the reader must come after, not before, accepting certain constraints on the process of interpretation and that, furthermore, certain interpretations are not 'contextually legitimated'. The

interpretive choices that I as a reader will make will be encouraged and constrained by some of the structural devices contained in the text.

The types of readings undertaken in this thesis are constrained by the texts themselves - what Eco (1990, 21) calls 'contextual pressure'. As Iser contends (1972, 217), a second reading of a text may produce a different impression from the first, but 'the text must be such as to allow this variation'. Here I draw upon Belsey (1994, 91) who, following Beneviste's discussion of the functions of discourse (1971, 110), distinguishes three basic kinds of texts: declarative, imperative and interrogative.

An example of a declarative text is classic realism, which stabilises the reader's position. In Easthope's words (1991, 69), the realist text 'aims to secure for the reader a position of dominant specularity ... "outside looking on"'. The declarative texts under consideration in this thesis are Pramoedya's tetralogy and Mangunwijaya's *Burung-burung manyar* and *Burung-burung rantau*. However, as Belsey points out (1994, 104), even the classic realist text is open to plural readings when it is viewed not as a reflection of the world but rather as a construct, something which can thus be *de*constructed. Deconstruction specifically examines the process of the text's production and seeks to expose contradictions with it, thus rendering it plural, 'no longer an object for passive consumption but an object of work by the reader to produce meaning.' Deconstructing the text releases 'the possible positions of its intelligibility'. Plurality resides in the parts of the discourse, such as symbols and codes of reference, which are 'free-floating' and of 'indeterminate authority'. In Belsey's view, then, even ‘readerly’ declarative realist texts are open to plural readings, though less so than the 'writerly' interrogative texts.

The imperative text gives orders to the reader and invites him/her to adopt a position of struggle against something non-fictional in the text (Belsey gives as examples "sin", "the Conservative Party" and "Russia"). The reader of an imperative text, while constituted as a unified subject, is nonetheless in conflict with something existing outside the discourse. The text invites (or to use Belsey's

stronger term, 'exhorts') the reader to share in a struggle against that non-fictional extra-textual entity. Extreme types of imperative texts are propagandist in tone. Pramoedya's tetralogy could also be constituted as a set of imperative texts, the possible non-fictional site(s) of struggle being feudalistic power structures, class conflict and/or colonialism. (As Belsey points out {1994, 92}, different readings might transfer a text from one modality to another, but the text itself nonetheless puts constraints on the types of reading that are cognitively possible.)

The interrogative text unsettles the reader; rather than giving information, it invites the reader to provide answers to questions raised in the text. The narrative does not lead to the closure of the classic realist text. Modernist and postmodernist novels are examples of such interrogative discourse; they are texts that put 'the reader's security in question' (Easthope 1991, 69) by foregrounding their own textuality. This serves to thwart the mimetic expectations the reader brings to the text. Texts under discussion in this thesis that may be termed "interrogative" are Mangunwijaya's *Durga Umayi* and Putu Wijaya's *Teror*, *Sobat*, *Kroco, Byar pet* and *Perang*.

By presuming to classify the texts we are of course inferring the intention of the author, in much the same way as Davis (1978) does in his categorisation of literature into dialectical, rhetorical and problematical forms.[1] As suggested above, the possible interpretations of the texts are indeed constrained to an extent by the presence, but not necessarily by the overt intention, of the author. While I do not concur with Hirsch (1967, 225-6) that 'any theory which tries to dispense with the author as specifier of meaning by asserting that textual meaning is purely objectively determined finds itself chasing will-o'-the-wisps', I find that, irrespective of the reading strategy adopted, it is impossible for me to completely efface the author's "horizon" from the texts. I do not accept Hirsch's position that the only truly coherent reading of a text is the one which reconstructs the author's subjective stance. I do, however, acknowledge the fact that the author's outlook,

[1] Davis's main concern is, however, to find a tool for interpreting all three types of literature.

associations and expectations form part of the "baggage" that I as a reader may invoke when reading a text.

At this point some further discussion of the notion of "authorial voice" is warranted. As noted above, the authorial voice exists in a given text at both an intrinsic and an extrinsic level. As an intrinsic part of the text, the authorial voice can constitute a powerful narrative device. As critics like Booth (1961) have demonstrated, our status as readers can be shaped by that authorial voice in the text through the ways in which the author uses devices such as reliable/unreliable narration, irony and silence to manipulate (or 'make' to use Booth's term) the reader. Identification of this intrinsic voice often requires a very close reading of the text in order to reveal the author's "disguises". Booth reminds us (1961, 20),

> The author's judgment is always present, always evident to anyone who knows how to look for it…we must never forget that though the author can to some extent choose his disguises, he can never choose to disappear.

There is also the authorial voice which is external to the text, that is, the presence of the author's own views on any number of issues – socio-political, historical, literary – in the text. As Lamarque (1990, 131) says, 'Stories don't just exist, they are told, and not just told but told from some perspective or other.' Unlike the intrinsic authorial voice, recognition of this extrinsic voice is gained by looking outside the text, by recognising the intersections between the narrative of the text and independently existing views, ideas and opinions of the author.

While my readings do in some places reveal the existence of the "intrinsic" authorial voice, it is the "extrinsic" voice which speaks loudest to me as a reader familiar with the published essays, articles and opinions of the authors under consideration. Specific references to "authorial voice" in this thesis should be understood as this extrinsic voice.

* * *

The interpretive strategies adopted in this thesis were chosen because my response to the texts and my understanding of authorial intention led me to see particular interpretive frameworks as being appropriate to some texts and not to others.

My first reading strategy follows the tenets of cultural materialism. Cultural materialism, along with its American counterpart New Historicism, was a response to formalist approaches (such as that of the New Critics) which were predominantly concerned with the aesthetic effects produced by various literary devices, in isolation from any human or social context - what Dollimore and Sinfield (1985, vii) call 'immanent criticism'. In the formalist perspective, as in the universal humanist tradition, the literary critic occupies what Wilson (1995, 5) calls 'a transcendent, virtual point outside of history'.

It was Raymond Williams who first coined the term "cultural materialism". He was concerned to demonstrate that cultural products do not transcend their conditions of production, but are constitutive of those conditions.[1] Cultural materialism thus privileges the "extra-textual reality" of the text, a concern alluded to by Said (1994, 13):

> To lose sight of or ignore the national and international context of, say, Dickens' representations of Victorian businessmen, and to focus only on the internal coherence of their roles in his novels is to miss an essential connection between his fiction and its historical world. And understanding that connection does not reduce or diminish the novels' value as works of art: on the contrary, because of their *worldliness*, because of their complex affiliations with their real setting, they are *more* interesting and *more* valuable as works of art.

Cultural materialism is a way of reading that accords with the demands of the small but influential Indonesian literary movement referred to above as the '*sastra kontekstual* debates'. This movement, which was at its most vocal in the early 1980s, called for literature to be read contextually, an appeal which came in

[1] Williams was also at pains to correct the popularly held interpretation of Marx's base-and-superstructure theory in which "culture" is merely a superstructural "reflection" of the more important and determining economic base. In Williams' view, culture has its own autonomy and its own agency. See Wallace 1998.

response to growing dissatisfaction with the perceived dominance of "universal humanism" as the *sine qua non* of literary ideology in Indonesia. The most well-received works of literature in Indonesia during the first decade or so of the New Order regime invoked "universal" human concerns and invited a reading which situated them as part of the "universal humanist" tradition. The contextualists sought to broaden the definition of "literature" and to introduce new ways of "reading". They challenged the concept of an authentic literature which 'derives from a notion of “literature” as existing beyond the realms of social context, cultural constraints and the history of mankind[1] (Heryanto 1984b, 9) and sought to replace it with "contextual literature" (*sastra kontekstual*), literature inspired, informed by and read from within a specific social, political and historical context.

As well as representing a continuation of the "engaged literature" debates which have periodically surfaced in Indonesian literary circles since the 1930s, the *sastra kontekstual* movement was also concerned with the way in which literature was critically reviewed and assessed. Nadjib (1995, 11) advocated a relativist approach to literary criticism, arguing that what was "good" or "bad" in one context was not necessarily so in another, and maintained that works of literature should be evaluated contextually:

> One can't compare something from Madura with something from Java, using a theory from Brasilia.[2]

In this thesis, the cultural materialist reading of each of the texts situates them materially in several ways. It looks for ways in which they intersect with and/or are constitutive of the literary and cultural debates in Indonesia during the period 1980-1995. It analyses the conditions of their production through an examination of the ways in which they reproduce concerns from the authors' life experience and other fictional and non-fictional work. Critical response to the

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[1] bersumber dari suatu pengertian "sastra" yang terletak di luar kehidupan sosial, daya jangkau budaya, dan sejarah manusia

[2] kita tak bisa memperbandingkan ke Maduraan dan ke Jawaan berdasarkan teori Brasilia

novels is also analysed with a view to explaining why these texts were received as they were, given the socio-historical context of their production.

The second interpretive strategy adopted in this thesis is a postmodernist reading of *Durga Umayi*, *Teror*, *Sobat*, *Kroco, Byar pet* and *Perang*. The fabric of these texts, their digressive and non-discursive style, their fragmentation and their indeterminacy invite such a reading. From their first page all six novels challenge any conventional notions of things being "as they seem". These are patently not totalising discourses; they frustrate attempts at realist readings and the reader is sometimes left with nothing but the formal features of the text which become the only elements of the narrative upon which the attention can be fixed. In Belsey's terms, they are interrogative texts - they are readerly rather than writerly, they lack closure, and they challenge any notion on the part of the reader that s/he knows "how to read". The reading of these novels in chapter five situates them as part of a wider discourse that is constitutive of the pervasive sense of ontological uncertainty, a hallmark of the postmodern condition.

Chapter six incorporates the third interpretive strategy of this thesis: a postcolonial reading of Pramoedya's tetralogy and Mangunwijaya's *Burung-burung manyar*, *Burung-burung rantau* and *Durga Umayi*. It is the stories these novels have to tell which invite a postcolonial reading. They are concerned with the processes of colonisation and decolonisation and with the effect of those processes on an independent Indonesia. They thus invite a reading that seeks to situate them as part of a wider body of postcolonial discourse. While it may be argued that such a reading actually takes a cultural materialist perspective, I argue that the focus of a postcolonial reading is different from a reading which seeks to contextualise a literary work within a specific socio-historical setting. Signifiers of postcoloniality are not culturally specific; as the large body of critical work in the field has shown, the shared experience of colonisation has resulted in a commonality of postcolonial markers across a broad spectrum of postcolonial literature. Specifically, the reading in this thesis foregrounds a concern with place and displacement, the semiotics of

language and clothing, hybridity, corporeality and the deconstruction of national history. These are all postcolonial signifiers that feature prominently in the works of Pramoedya and Mangunwijaya and in other postcolonial literatures.

* * *

In this thesis I work on the premise that, as Belsey maintains (1994, 144), the work of criticism is to release possible meanings (rather than, as Hirsch and others would have it, to find out what the author meant). My project is not to suggest a total deconstruction of the texts under discussion. Rather, I relate Belsey's understanding of the task of criticism to Fish's notion of interpretive strategies, which I find productive for several reasons. It is a notion which allows for plurality of meaning within a given text but, because that plurality is linked to the particular interpretive strategy adopted by the reader, it means that the text can be "knowable" and "meaningful" within the boundaries of that interpretive strategy. In short, it makes it possible to say something significant about a text without purporting to tell the "truth" about it. Furthermore, Fish's approach relieves the text of its culture-bound status, which renders it valuable only when relativised against the specific culture in which it was written, and moves it into a new realm where it can also be relativised against the interpretive decisions of a particular reader, and endowed with new - but not "better" or "truer" - meanings. (I thus reject Wellek's notion of 'a hierarchy of viewpoints'. {Wellek and Warren 1956, 144})

I turn first to Pramoedya's grand narratives, the novels whose publication certainly fuelled, and may have indeed been the catalyst for the *sastra kontekstual* debates of the early 1980s. The reading in the next chapter is informed by the concerns of Indonesian cultural debates and Pramoedya's place within them, and by the socio-political circumstances that have shaped Pramoedya's development as a writer.

CHAPTER TWO

NARRATIVES OF NATION (I) - SOCIAL REALISM

Allowing the past to explain the present - The Buru Quartet

> In my works, I try to tell about particular stages in this nation's journey, and try to answer: why did this nation get to be this way?[1] (Toer 1995a, 233)
>
> And all the activities of the modern Natives will follow in his footsteps.[2] (RK,143)

In 1981, after a period of fourteen years imprisonment, ten of them in exile on remote Buru island, Pramoedya Ananta Toer made a triumphant return to the Indonesian literary arena with the publication of *Bumi manusia* (*This earth of mankind*), the first novel in a cycle of four (sometimes referred to as the "Buru Quartet") which would be published over the next six years. For Pramoedya, writing the tetralogy was a statement of his 'commitment to the nation at a particular point in time'.[3] (Toer 1981a) The novels are a fictionalised account of the early Indonesian nationalist movement, particularly those aspects of it whose intellectual basis can be traced to post-Enlightenment European traditions. Exemplifying Smail's observation (1971, 281) that 'the inner political history of those years consisted of self-transformations by all who came to play roles in (the) outer history', the story is told

[1] dalam karya-karya saya, saya mencoba berkisah tentang tahap-tahap tertentu perjalanan bangsa ini dan mencoba menjawab: mengapa bangsa ini jadi begini?

[2] Dan semua kegiatan Pribumi yang modern akan melalui jejak langkahnya.

[3] komitmen saya dengan *nation* pada suatu waktu

through the eyes of its protagonist, Minke, a prime mover in the formation of the nationalist movement, who is inspired by the ideals of freedom and brotherhood that he has learned from the French Revolution. Minke's transformation encapsulates Pramoedya's belief that 'history means change and this comes from people changing themselves'.[1]

Pramoedya's tetralogy represented an injection into Indonesian literature of serious historical realism covering the years 1898-1918, a period of significant political, economic and social change in the East Indies. GoGwilt suggests that the novels, like those of Scott and Tolstoy, foreground 'a complex relation between history and autobiography, memory and forgetting.' (Toer 1996a, 150) The novels do not constitute historiography and they are not unmediated history, but they are historical: they reconstruct a particular world, they 'recapture the fleeting moment'. (Shaw 1983, 25) In Pramoedya's own words (1992, 3), they are 'a downstream reality, whose origin was an upstream reality...a historical reality'.[2] My reading of the novels in this chapter foregrounds both that historical reality and Pramoedya's own life history, which has shaped and constrained his experience as a writer. As Dewanto suggests (1997, viii), most Indonesian readers find it difficult to separate Pramoedya's works from the historical circumstances of their production.

The milieu represented in the novels is the Netherlands East Indies in the early part of the twentieth century. Because the sense of history is foregrounded, the texts provide a position in which I can situate myself as reader. The novels constantly point outward, towards the actual world they are depicting, and as the reader I need to engage with that world as well as the world of the novels themselves in order to derive their full meaning. They thus invite a cultural materialist reading, which establishes interconnections between the texts and the socio-historical context in which they were written.

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[1] See Toer 1981b, 513 (This interview was published in English. To my knowledge there is no published Indonesian transcript of it.)

[2] kenyataan hilir, yang asalnya adalah kenyataan hulu...kenyataan historis

The reading of the novels in this chapter first examines their place within recent Indonesian literary debates. It then foregrounds those elements of the novels which reflect Pramoedya's own philosophical and political concerns - the extent to which, as Hosillos puts it (1997, 237), 'the writer is in his creation'. Thirdly, it examines the contribution made by the novels to the project of "imagining" Indonesian history, specifically those elements of the radical nationalist movement which have been effectively eliminated from "authorised" versions of Indonesian history. Finally it seeks to deconstruct some of the critical response to the novels, to suggest reasons why they were received as they were by Indonesian readers and critics, given the socio-political climate of the time.

Literary Polemics

The release of Pramoedya and other political prisoners detained after the 1965 aborted coup attempt[1], and the publicity surrounding the publication of *Bumi manusia*, sparked the reemergence of an issue which has surfaced regularly in Indonesian literary history, namely the way in which social commitment can and should be translated into art. This is a question which has frequently been embedded within a wider self-conscious search for an "authentic" Indonesian culture.[2] It is a dialogue which was first opened up in the so-called "cultural polemics" (*polemik kebudayaan*) of the 1930s, an ongoing debate between key literary figures of the day including Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (who even in the obituary publsihed in *Kompas* in 1994 was still being defined as 'the figure of the cultural polemics'[3]), Sanusi Pane, Dr Soetomo and Ki Hadjar Dewantara, with the *Pujangga Baru* literary journal one of its main forums. Some of the key figures in the cultural polemics were involved

[1] For a discussion of the work of some of the other writers released back into society in 1979 see Hill 1984

[2] See for example 'Kebudayaan Indonesia: Pandangan 1991', chap. in Dewanto 1996; Mohamad 1996; Keith Foulcher 1993c.

[3] 'Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana Telah Tiada' 19/7/94

in the early nationalist movement.[1] Dr Soetomo and Ki Hadjar Dewantara, for example, feature in Pramoedya's tetralogy.

The founders of the *Pujangga Baru* journal, in particular Alisjahbana, were possibly the first to formally address the idea of "Indonesian-ness" in culture and literature.[2] Alisjahbana attempted to convince his peers that Indonesia would only be able to take its place in the modern world if she followed in the footsteps of the West. The past for him was *jahilliah*: the Islamic term for the period of ignorance. This view placed him in diametrical opposition with other participants in the polemics such as Sanusi Pane, who drew on elements of the (Javanese) past as inspiration for the future. Alisjahbana (1977, 14) vehemently rejected this position by pointing out that "Indonesia" did not actually have a past. The so-called heroes of Indonesia's past in fact belonged to various ethnic groups for whom the notion of a united Indies was inconceivable: Diponegoro belonged to the Javanese, Tuanku Imam Bonjol to the Minangkabau, Teungku Umar to the Acehnese. Lacking a past, then, the only way to look is forward.

Alisjahbana was in favour of moderate and responsible individualism, intellectualism and materialism, the gifts of the French revolution. He railed against the education system offered in the *pesantren*, the traditional Javanese village school favoured as a model by Ki Hadjar Dewantara and Dr Soetomo, precisely because it was anti-individualistic, anti-intellectual and anti-materialist. While Ki Hadjar Dewantara disapproved of Western-orientated schools because students became deracinated[3] in them, Alisjahbana maintained that deracination was precisely what was needed in order to create a new free nation. (This was a view about which Pramoedya was later extremely derisive.[4])

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[1] For details of Sanusi's life and work see Teeuw 1986 especially volume 1, 24-28ff. For details of Soetomo's life and work see van Niel 1960, 224-9 and for details of the life and work of Ki Hadjar Dewantara (Suwardi Suryaningrat) see van Niel 1960, 220-2 . For details of Alisjahbana's life and work see Teeuw 1986 especially volume 1, 31-4. For a commentary on Alisjahbana's contemporary relevance see Buruma 1984. Buruma likens Alisjahbana to the 'many rootless Jewish intellectuals in the West'.

[2] See Alisjahbana 1977

[3] Ironically, he used the Dutch term *ontworteld*

[4] See Toer 1962

Alisjahbana believed that the artist should be in the service of his people - to be labelled "didactic" should be seen as an honour. However, he would later be spurned by more radical proponents of committed art for his "bourgeois" views. Interpretations of exactly what constitutes *seni berisi* ("art with a purpose") appear to be relative to the prevailing sociopolitical environment, as indeed are interpretations of "universalism".[1]

The function of art and literature once again predominated literary discussions in the 1950s with the emergence of Lekra (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*), the cultural organ of the PKI in which Pramoedya later played a prominent role. Initially Lekra provided a forum for those who believed that the artist's individuality should be reconciled with a commitment to serve his or her society and that culture should become an instrument of social change. By the 1960s this had become more of a prescriptive principle and was generally viewed as the overarching Lekra ideology. In 1963 a group of artists and writers signed a *Manifes Kebudayaan* (Cultural Manifesto) which, while rejecting the Lekra ideology that 'politics is the commander' (*politik adalah panglima*), also acknowledged the fact that any notion of 'art above politics' was also flawed. This document was ridiculed by left-wing intellectuals, including Pramoedya, who contemptuously abbreviated it to *Manikebu* meaning 'buffalo semen'.

Lekra died a sudden death after the abortive coup attempt of 1965, which resulted in the immediate banning of the PKI and all its instrumentalities. In the first twenty years of Suharto's New Order regime, literature and writers in Indonesia came under the domination of a cultural hegemony that shadowed the conservative political hegemony of the state. "Universalism" became the standard to aim for in literature; attempts to publish or perform works of social criticism were frequently thwarted through censorship or, more overtly, as in the case of Rendra, through prosecution and detention.[2]

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[1] See for example 'Puisi yang berpijak di bumi sendiri', chap. in Mohamad 1993

[2] Rendra is one of the most prominent literary figures in contemporary Indonesia. He established a reputation first as a poet and in the early seventies began to write political drama. During the

The publication of Pramoedya's social realist tetralogy rekindled the issue of political commitment in literature. In the *sastra kontekstual* debates of the early 1980s artists and intellectuals once more began to discuss openly the nature of "left-wing" literature, the place of social commitment in the arts and the interaction between politics and literature. Heryanto debunked the notion that there is a clear dividing line between "literature" and "non-literature" in Indonesia and suggested that a study of traditional societies in Indonesia would demonstrate that the line between literature and politics has always been blurred. Mangunwijaya too (1986b, 15) suggested that the boundary between literature and non-literature is an artificial one, and maintained (1983a) that 'good literature incorporates politics and religion'.[1]

Pramoedya's place in the debates

Pramoedya began publishing his views on literature and its relationship to politics and the social commitment of the artist in the early 1960s. His articles were published in *Lentera*, the cultural supplement (which he edited) of the left-wing newspaper *Bintang Timur*. The most controversial of those articles was a series entitled 'Jang harus dibabat dan jang harus dibangun' ('That which must be cut down and that which must be encouraged'). (Toer, 1962) Among 'that which must be cut down' he made veiled references to writers opposed to the ideology of the Soekarno regime - whom he described as *gelandangan* (vagrants). Pramoedya was also instrumental in having the Cultural Manifesto outlawed, and the books of its supporters banned.

Pramoedya has consistently been opposed to the universal humanist position adopted by Alisjahbana, which he perceived as being inspired and driven by

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Soeharto regime he was periodically subjected to performance bans, most notably in Yogya, where he was not permitted to perform from 1974 until 1977. In 1978, after a bomb had been thrown at one of his public readings of protest poetry at Taman Ismail Marzuki in Jakarta, he was arrested and detained without trial for several months on the grounds that he posed a threat to social order. After his release he was subjected to a complete performance ban for seven years. For details of his life and work see Max Lane's preface to his translation of *Perjuangan Suku Naga* (*The Struggle of the Naga Tribe* St Lucia: UQP, 1979) and several articles in *Inside Indonesia*, for example 'Rendra downunder', December 1988

[1] karya sastra yang baik harus cakup politik dan religi

Western culture and civilisation. In Pramoedya's view, Alisjahbana was 'an idealist who has closed his eyes to the realities of life, because his dream is too strong, too beautiful, whereas reality is too bitter, too shallow, too torpid and thoroughly irksome.'[1] What Pramoedya particularly objected to was that Alisjahbana turned his back on Indonesian history:

> He has always scorned, rejected and attempted to destroy anything that smacked of being 'traditional', especially the culture of his own ancestors, without the least desire to understand its background and historical function.[2] (Toer, 1962)

In Pramoedya's view, Alisjahbana and his fellow-travellers (such as the poet J.E. Tatengkeng, whose motto was 'art is a movement of the soul' - *seni yaitu gerakan sukma*[3]) were merely craftsmen with no political will. Pramoedya (1962) claims that for this reason Alisjahbana ceased to make any contribution to Indonesian cultural debates after 1957, and Tatengkeng, 'because of his lack of political resoluteness, drifted from one political persuasion to another, finally vanishing without trace, like rubbish'.[4] This is a vindication for Pramoedya of the Lekra doctrine "politics is the commander". 'Lack of political resoluteness, which results in indecisive art and indecisive thought, must be swept away, must be cut down.'[5]

However, Pramoedya was also concerned at the consequences if literature were to be simply hijacked by politics; in his view literature should encompass all aspects of human life. In a 1952 essay, he comments,

> not infrequently what we call literature is a hodgepodge, a messy mix of literature, propaganda and antipathy towards a certain political

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[1] seorang idealis jang menutup mata terhadap realita jang hidup, karena impiannja terlalu keras, terlalu indah, sedangkan kenjataan terlalu pahit, dangkal, lamban, dan serba mendjengkelkan

[2] sudah sedjak mudanya menjindir, mengemplang dan mentjoba menggiling apa sadja jang serba traditional terutama adat nenek mojangnja sendiri, tanpa keinginan ataupun kemauan baik untuk memahami latarbelakang dan fungsi historiknja.

[3] see Teeuw 1986, 44-45

[4] karena tidak punja ketegasan dilapangan politik achirnja mondar mandir tidak karuan ke berbagai pihak, dan achirnja lenjap sebagai sampah.

[5] ketidaktegasan politik, jang menjebabkan timbulnja seni dan pemikiran gelandangan, harus disapu, harus dibabat

> viewpoint, at the expense of other possibilities. In such cases literature is sacrificed by and for politics, and as such is propaganda, no longer worthy of the label literature.[1] (Toer 1952c, 8)

As Abel (1997, 27) points out, this suggests a different interpretation of the phrase *politik adalah panglima* than that generally constructed by the Manikebuists. The latter claimed that it unambiguously meant that art should be directed by politics - ie the politics of the PKI. Pramoedya's comment indicates that he distanced himself from such prescriptiveness. Much later, in a 1995 interview, he stressed the need to recognise that politics and literature are inextricably linked:

> There is nothing prescriptive in this. Literature is unavoidably linked with politics, simply by virtue of being part of the fabric of society. Just as every individual is part of the fabric of power or politics.[2] (Toer 1995f)

It is a notion echoed by Minke in *Rumah kaca* (313) when he declares, 'Everything is political! Everything needs organisation.'[3]

The deep-seated ideological conflicts that inhere in literary debates in Indonesia were rekindled in 1995 when Pramoedya was awarded the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award for literature by the Philippines government. Pramoedya was cited for 'illuminating with brilliant stories the historical awakening and modern experience of the Indonesian people.'[4] Pramoedya regarded his receipt of the award as a great honour, claiming that it was highly symbolic of a growing process of democratisation in Asia, and likening it to the reconciliation of the USA and Vietnam, and the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. (Toer 1995b) Others begged to differ. Arguing that he had engaged in oppressive and intimidatory tactics against non-Lekra writers in the 1950s and 1960s, twenty six prominent Indonesian artists

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[1] tak djarang apa jang dinamakan kesusasteraan itu tjampur-aduk dan merupakan bahan gubal antara sastera, propaganda, antipati terhadap politik tertentu, dengan melupakan kemungkinan-kemungkinan lain. Dalam hal ini kesusasteraan jang sesungguhnja dikurbankan oleh dan untuk politik. Kesusasteraan demikian adalah kesusasteraan propaganda yang belum lagi patut mendapat nama kesusasteraan.

[2] Tak ada yang mengharuskan. Ia dengan sendirinya terlibat. Sebab sastra berada dalam rangkuman masyarakat, sebagaimana setiap individu berada dalam rangkuman kekuasaan atau politik.

[3] Semua berpautan dengan politik! Semua berjalan dengan organisasi.

[4] Press release 19 July 1995

and writers issued a statement vehemently opposing the awarding of the prize to Pramoedya. As a form of personal protest, Mochtar Lubis, a recipient of the Award in 1958, returned his medal and part of the prize money to the Philippines.[1] (It should also be noted that there were some people - Lucila Hosillos (1997), for example - who urged Pramoedya not to accept the award because of President Magsaysay's right-wing political inclinations and his lack of real vision.)

The polemics climaxed with a seminar at the Jakarta Arts Institute in November 1995. This seminar was organised in part to respond to *Prahara budaya*[2], the recently published book on Lekra and the ideological cultural conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s, a book which purported to 'answer the big questions of those who didn't witness the turmoil of the time.'[3] The seminar raised many of the familiar questions about committed literature and, perhaps inevitably, developed into a divisive and sometimes acrimonious row between Pramoedya's supporters and his detractors. This is indicative of the apparent centrality of Pramoedya to literary debate in Indonesia.[4] Despite statements by the organisers of the seminar that its purpose was to 'discuss the current state of culture in Indonesia and the relevance of earlier debates, such as the *Polemik Kebudayaan*, to contemporary culture'[5], many journalists and participants perceived the seminar as a forum for 'discussing the pros and cons of the awarding of the Magsaysay Award to Pramoedya Ananta Toer'.[6]

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[1] It is rather ironic that Mochtar Lubis had given Pramoedya a typewriter upon his return to Jakarta from exile on Buru, thus symbolically facilitating the resumption of Pramoedya's writing career. (See Ismail 1995)

[2] Edited by DS Moeljanto and Taufiq Ismail, Jakarta, Mizan: 1995

[3] menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan besar orang muda yang tak ikut menyaksikan hiruk-pikuk zaman itu

[4] Henk Maier, among others, is critical of the fact that literary discussions in Indonesia inevitably involve or even devolve from an analysis of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's writing. Maier's comments formed the basis of a lively discussion at the workshop 'Postcoloniality and the Question of Modern Indonesian Literature' at the University of Sydney in May 1998.
Nirwan Dewanto, too, asks in the foreword of *Polemik Hadiah Magsaysay*, 'Is Pramoedya really so important that the awarding of an international literary award to him can undermine the status of Indonesian literature? Have we lost the capacity to discuss a literary work without having to constantly refer to the fact that other writers are more morally upright than Pramoedya?' (Sebegitu pentingkah Pramoedya sehingga hadiah sastra internasional baginya bisa menusuk kehormatan sastra Indonesia? Sudah hilangkah kemampuan kita mengkaji karya kecuali dengan beringar-bingar bahwa masih banyak sastrawan yang lebih bermoral ketimbang Pramoedya?)

[5] mendiskusikan keadaan budaya masa kini, dan relevansinya terhadap peristiwa yang lalu, seperti Polemik Kebudayaan, untuk kebudayaan masa kini (*Refleksi Kebudayaan,*143)

[6] mendialogkan soal pro dan kontra pemberian Hadiah Magsaysay pada Pramoedya Ananta Toer (*Refleksi Kebudayaan,*96)

(This perception may well have been reinforced by the fact that Pramoedya's face featured on the front of the "Refleksi Kebudayaan" T shirts which were sold at the seminar!)

Reading the seminar proceedings leaves one with an overwhelming impression that Pramoedya's involvement with Lekra and the extent of his alleged persecution of his political opponents remains, magnet-like, a cornerstone, of Indonesian literary discourse. The question remains as to what would happen if the level of Pramoedya's involvement were in fact proven - if he himself were to "confess" or if he were brought to trial. What would happen if the bans on Pramoedya's books were lifted? ('Obviously the banning of a book can elevate its status and mythologise its author'[1], wrote Dewanto in *Polemik hadiah Magsaysay* {xii}) What would such space-clearing gestures achieve? Until they happen, there seems little doubt that Pramoedya's iconic presence - unseen, perhaps uninvited, perhaps unwanted - will always shadow Indonesian literary discussions.

'The writer in his creation'

The tetralogy can be read as a manifesto of Pramoedya's philosophical position, his political concerns and his vision for the future. The seeds of the novels can be found in an essay he wrote some twenty years before *Bumi manusia* was published. The title of that essay, 'Dengan datangnya Lenin bumi manusia lebih kaya' ('The arrival of Lenin enriched this earth of mankind')[2] contains within it the title of the first volume of the tetralogy. In the essay, glossing Bertrand Russell's admiration of Lenin and Einstein, Pramoedya wrote, 'our century is the century of the People and of Science and Knowledge'.[3] Those two key concepts - the *rakyat* (the people) and *ilmu pengetahuan* (science and knowledge) - inform and shape the first three volumes of Pramoedya's tetralogy and, as I will argue below, represent sites in the novels where the authorial voice speaks loudest.

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[1] Melarang buku, ternyata bisa berarti membesarkannya, memitoskan pengarangnya
[2] *Bintang Timur* 22 April 1960
[3] abad kita sekarang adalah abad Rakyat dan Ilmu Pengetahuan

Before examining the ways in which the novels are constitutive of Pramoedya's notion of 'the century of the People', I wish to look more closely at how they project his idea of 'the century of Science and Knowledge'. It is a notion which is announced in the opening lines of *Bumi manusia*:

> From a very young age I came to understand that science and knowledge had bestowed upon me a blessing whose beauty knew no bounds.[1] (BM, 2)

The first three novels in the tetralogy can be read as an essay on the ways in which an individual may recuperate agency within a hierarchical and tightly controlled social structure. *Ilmu pengetahuan* (which may be translated as "science" or "knowledge" or as both together, as above), which is understood in the novels as a direct legacy of the Enlightenment, is one of the ways through which Minke acquires agency.

Minke's engagement with Enlightenment ideals is complex. His colonial education allows him to comprehend the international ramifications of the French revolution and Enlightenment ideals. However while he believes, like Pramoedya (who uses the German words *Verlichtung* and *Aufklaerung*, 1992, 4), that only the spirit of the Enlightenment can unsettle the deeply-entrenched feudalism of Javanese culture, Minke also has cause to question the place of Enlightenment ideals in the radical nationalist movement of the Indies.

Being educated in a Dutch school laid the foundation-stone for Minke's self-transformation. But being "schooled" is not the only way to acquire *ilmu pengetahuan*. Throughout the first two volumes of the tetralogy Minke engages in polemics with a number of influential characters, which contribute much more to his *ilmu pengetahuan* than does his formal schooling. His liberal Dutch friends Miriam and Sarah de la Croix, for example, scoff at Minke's unquestioning admiration of his teacher Magda Peters, telling him that schoolteachers are little better than snake-oil salesmen. They tell him that an open exchange of ideas

[1] Dalam hidupku, baru seumur jagung, sudah dapat kurasai: ilmu pengetahuan telah memberikan padaku suatu restu yang tiada terhingga indahnya.

between educated people is a far better way to improve oneself. Such an 'open exchange of ideas' has always been one of Pramoedya's projects. His response to critics of his outspoken articles in *Lentera* has consistently been that he was simply 'opening up a polemic (*membuka polemik*)'.[1] The process by which Minke refines his *ilmu pengetahuan* - through his interaction with key influential characters like Jean Marais, Nyai Ontosoroh, Kommer and Ter Haar - may be read as a metaphor for the way in which Pramoedya would like to see the current young generation of Indonesia acquire an understanding of the historical processes which shaped Indonesian culture.

Through his Socratic conversations with his various mentors Minke begins to comprehend the effects on his people of three hundred years of colonial rule. He is also alerted to the danger of subservience and fatalism, traits which have characterised his own people and have made them easy prey for colonial predators. Jean tells him,

> Your country is too isolated, too remote to pick up on what's happening in other countries... And so those other countries just come here and enjoy the good life at your expense. Even a nation as tiny as Holland did it. And your people can't do a thing about it.[2] (ASB, 46)

Pramoedya too (1992, 3-4) claims scornfully that the Javanese allowed themselves to be 'swallowed whole (*ditelan mentah-mentah*)' by the Dutch, 'a people few in number, from a small country at the northern tip of the world'.[3] It is also a sentiment expressed by Pangemanann:

> Try taking away the property of a native. If it is taken by a European or a Eurasian, the Native will not say a word. He does not feel that any of his rights have been violated. They don't understand the

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[1] See for example Toer 1995d

[2] Negerimu memang terpencil, terlampau jauh untuk bisa dengar derap bangsa-bangsa lain...dia bisa datang padamu dan mendapatkan tanah lembut dan hangat untuk bersantai dan bersimarajalela. Bangsa kecil seperti Belanda pun bisa berbuat semacam itu di negerimu. Dan bangsamu tidak bisa berbuat sesuatu apa.
While doing research into the form of folk theatre known as *ludruk* in Surabaya, James Peacock was told by a local citizen that 'the Dutch talked the Javanese into giving away Java because Javanese just melt when talked nicely to.' (Peacock 1968, 189)

[3] bangsa berjumlah kecil, negeri kecil, di ujung utara dunia

> meaning of the word "rights", they understand nothing about law.'[1] (RK: 62)

Pramoedya's scorn for Javanese "feudalistic" views is intensified by his belief that Javanese poets, inward-looking and self-congratulatory, suffered from delusions of grandeur:

> In 3 1/2 centuries of colonisation, my ethnic group's power never once prevailed against European power, not in any field, but especially not militarily. The poets and writers of Java, being some of those who think and imagine within the framework of *kampung* civilisation and culture, flaunt the superiority of Java: that in facing the Dutch and Europe, Java never lost. The masturbatory stories that are staged and written, and even the stories spread by word of mouth, constitute one of the reasons I always ask: why does my ethnic group not want to face reality?[2] (Toer 1992, 2-3)

That "reality" is suggested in an incident in *Bumi manusia* (107) when Minke's Dutch teacher demands of him,

> 'Hey, Minke, the Javanese representative in the room, what has your nation ever contributed to humanity?'[3]

Minke finds himself unable to reply, and suggests furthermore that

> I wouldn't have been the only one to be thrown by such a question; I dare say all the gods in the puppetmaster's *wayang* chest would have been hard-pressed to answer it.[4]

Minke's initial response to the "reality" of Javanese subservience, fatalism and feudalism is to reject completely his Javanese *priyayi* background. At his father's

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[1] Coba ambillah barang hak-milik Pribumi. Kalau yang mengambil orang Eropa atau peranakan Eropa, Pribumi akan diam saja, tidak merasa hak-haknya terlanggar. Mereka tak tahu apa artinya hak, tak tahu hukum.

[2] Dalam penjajahan selama 3 1/2 abad kekuatan etnikku tidak pernah menang menghadapi kekuatan Eropa, di semua bidang, terutama di bidang militer. Para pujangga dan pengarang Jawa, sebagai bagian dari pemikir dan pencipta dalam rangka peradaban dan budaya 'kampung' menampilkan keunggulan Jawa, bahwa dalam menghadapi Belanda, Eropa, Jawa tidak pernah kalah. Cerita-cerita masturbastik yang dipanggungkan, juga yang tertulis, juga cerita lisan dari mulut ke mulut, menjadi salah satu penyebab aku selalu bertanya: mengapa etnikku tidak mau menghadapi kenyataan?

[3] 'Eh Minke, wakil bangsa Jawa dalam ruangan ini, apa sudah disumbangkan bangsamu pada ummat manusia?'

[4] Bukan saja aku menggeragap mendapat pertanyaan dadakan itu, boleh jadi seluruh dewa dalam kotak wayang Ki dalang akan hilang semangat hanya untuk menjawab.

investiture as Regent[1], his realisation that the petty rulers of Java do not understand that a new civilisation is dawning strengthens his resolve to turn his back on the feudal values of *priyayi* Java embodied in his father. 'The Javanese upper class is not my world! (*Kepriyayian bukan duniaku*, BM, 120) he declares to himself.

But Jean, who fought on the side of the Dutch in the Aceh War[2] and subsequently opted to live as an *Indo* in Java, opens Minke's eyes to the fact that there are other Javas, that the privileged Javanese world view of his *priyayi* upbringing represents but one facet. This is also intimated by Pramoedya, who said in a recent interview,

> I am a critic of Javanese culture. While I have consciously used Javanese elements, I have done so with a critical eye, not under its influence. On the other hand, I have received the good values of Java, those that are decadent I have rejected. (Toer 1996b)

Minke's trip with Nyai Ontosoroh to Sidoardjo is a symbolic journey of discovery for Minke. It offers him an insight into the 'other Java' of which Jean Marais has accused him of being ignorant.[3] His close encounter with the farmer Trunodongso and his family is particularly revealing as it symbolises the wide gulf between *priyayi* and peasant Javanese. Enlightenment values notwithstanding, Minke is quick to invoke his *priyayi* upbringing when he feels he has been slighted. When he first meets the Trunodongso family, for example, he is shocked to be addressed in low Javanese. While his journalist friend Kommer lauds him as 'truly a child of the French Revolution (*betul-betul anak Revolusi Perancis*', ASB, 175), Minke confronts himself with the question, 'If you really are an admirer of the French Revolution, why were you so offended at being addressed in low Javanese by

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[1]The position of Regent (*bupati*) was the highest attainable by a Native. The Regent was directly responsible to the Dutch Resident. For an explanation of the colonial administrative system of the time see Sutherland 1979; van den Doel 1994

[2]1873-1908. For a discussion of the events surrounding the Aceh War, see Ricklefs 1981, 136-138.

[3] It also has contemporary resonance: appropriation of peasants' land continues to this day, and at around the time of the banning of Pramoedya's novels, a number of peasants in Jenggawah, East Java, were arrested by the army for resisting attempts to have their land fenced off for tobacco cultivation by a state plantation company. See TAPOL 45 (May 1981), 16

Trunodongso?'[1] He is forced to admit that 'if people spoke to me in high Javanese, I felt I had been elevated to the chosen few, raised to some higher plane, a god in a human's body, and these privileges bestowed upon me by my heritage gave me a great deal of pleasure.'[2] (ASB, 183) He is thus alerted to the huge barriers to democratisation which are inherent in the Javanese social hierarchy:

> Among the people of one nation, although they eat and drink the same things ... even among people sharing the same horse-cart, there is such a gap, still unbridged, perhaps unbridgeable.[3] (ASB, 239)

Minke also comes to understand that not only is there more than one "Java", there is also more than one "Europe". In particular, there is a "free Europe", inhabited by liberal Dutch such as Magda Peters, Miriam de la Croix and Ter Haar, and there is "colonial Europe". Even so, colonial Europe was born out of free Europe, so everything that smacks of Europe *ipso facto* smacks of colonialism. Minke must confront a dilemma alluded to by Pramoedya: that his mentor Europe, while practising democracy at home is undemocratic in the countries it colonised.[4]

In 'Jang harus dibabat dan harus dibangun', Pramoedya had lamented the fact that

> the awakening of other Asian nations was rarely made known in Indonesia, as a result of the Dutch East Indies' information policy; consequently Indonesian intellectuals lacked something vital, namely a point of comparison.[5]

In these novels Minke is provided with that 'something vital,' an external reference point against which he can measure the progress of his own country towards

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[1] Kalau benar kau pengagum Revolusi Perancis, mengapa kau tersinggung kalau seorang petani, seperti Trunodongso, bicara Jawa ngoko padamu?

[2] ...mendengarkan orang bicara kromo padaku, aku merasa sebagai manusia pilihan, bertempat di suatu ketinggian, dewa dalam tubuh manusia, dan keenakan warisan ini membelai-belai.

[3] Dalam satu bangsa, dengan satu asal makan dan asal minum, di atas satu negeri, bahkan dalam satu andong, bisa terjadi suatu jarak, belum atau tidak terseberangi.

[4] Pramoedya Ananta Toer, interview by author, September 1996, Jakarta.

[5] kebangunan negeri-negeri Asia lainnja jang sangat sedikit diperkenalkan di Indonesia sebagai akibat dari politik pemberitaan Hindia Belanda, menjebabkan kaum intelektual Indonesia kehilangan sesuatu jang sangat dibutuhkannja, jakni: bahan perbandingan.

democracy independence. His character can thus be understood as Pramoedya's archetypal idealised "intellectual", one who knows that

> It is not only from Europe that one can learn. The modern age has provided me with many breasts to suckle - the Natives themselves, Japan, China, America, India, Arabia, all the countries on earth.[1] (ASB, 165)

As such, as Pangemanann is only too aware, Minke represents a threat to the colonial regime: an educated Native with 'strange imaginings' (*angan-angan aneh*, RK, 51).[2]

When Minke makes the acquaintance of Ah Khouw, a member of the radical organisation 'Chinese Young Generation', Nyai Ontosoroh tells Minke that he 'will be able to learn from him, to gain from non-European ideas.'[3] Minke's response is telling: 'Learn from non-European ideas! What could my mother-in-law be thinking?'[4] (ASB, 70) However, from Ah Khouw Minke learns that China has rejected colonialism and is making moves towards republicanism. He also discerns that the growing visibility of China, coupled with the rebellion of the natives in the Philippines against both Spain and the United States, is making the colonial power nervous - nervous about what 'might be', in Minke's words. He himself comes to admire the Chinese as much as he does the Japanese, and begins to apprehend a restlessness among colonised people in Southeast Asia, against the colonial authorities. This foregrounding of the contribution of the Chinese to Indonesian

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[1] ..bukan hanya Eropa! Jaman modern ini telah menyampaikan padaku buah dada untuk menyusui aku, dari Pribumi sendiri, dari Jepang, Tiongkok, Amerika, India, Arab, dari semua bangsa di muka bumi ini.

[2] For a colonial government requiring strict methods of control, the educated colonial is potentially a loose cannon, a view which is summed up by the then Inspector of Education, Mr Habbema, in 1904: 'Many still doubt the wisdom of providing the native masses with education. The desirability of education for upper-class children is recognised, but not for the children of the ordinary villager. It is often argued that education should not be provided for all children not only because they do not need it but also because it will make them averse to manual labour. The result will be the creation of an intellectual proletariat. This could cause the government a great deal of trouble because disappointment followed by discontentment can lead to all sorts of excesses.' (Penders 1977, 155)

[3] '...kau tetap bisa belajar dari dia, dari pikiran yang bukan Eropa.'

[4] Belajar dari pikiran lain yang bukan Eropa! Apa saja yang hidup dalam pikiran mertuaku ini?

nationalist history echoes the concerns of Pramoedya's 1960 book *Hoakiau di Indonesia*, which was banned, and resulted in Pramoedya's imprisonment for a year.[1]

Pramoedya appropriates the prominent Dutch socialist H.J.F.M. Sneevliet (given the name Ter Haar in the tetralogy) to assist in Minke's accumulation of *ilmu pengetahuan*.[2] Ter Haar is a Dutch journalist and former sub-editor at the *Soerabaiaasch Nieuws*, which has published some of Minke's articles. Minke's lengthy conversations with Ter Haar equip him with some of the facts about capitalist practice. He discovers, for example, that the Sugar Syndicate's sphere of influence is not limited to control of the plantations and mills but that their enterprise extends into other ventures, including owning the *Soerabaiaasch Nieuws*. Minke now understands that his naive assumption that newspapers would be interested in the "truth" was quite misguided. Capitalist production, he discovers, is more concerned with strict methods of supervision and control. Although Minke still clings to his Enlightenment belief that science and knowledge is the source of power, Ter Haar demonstrates to him that science depends utterly on capital for its effectiveness. How would Stephenson have produced the locomotive without capital? (ASB, 261) It is a lesson reiterated by Miriam de la Croix, who makes Minke see that progress is not achieved by an unconditional acceptance of all that is new and "modern". She writes to him from Holland:

> This is the modern age, Minke. All that is not new is dismissed as being outdated, of relevance only to villagers and country bumpkins. People have become so carried away that they fail to register the fact that behind the fracas, the push, the infatuation with newness lurks a

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[1] This did not appear to diminish Pramoedya's respect for Soekarno, however. He has frequently said that the only national figure he really admired was Soekarno and he pays tribute to him for giving birth to a nation without bloodshed. For example, in a 1995 interview he said of Soekarno, 'He was able to give birth to a nation without spilling blood. He may well be the only one who's ever done that, or if not he is among a very select few.' (Ia sanggup melahirkan *nasion*, bukan bangsa, tanpa meneteskan darah. Mungkin dia satu-satunya, atau paling tidak satu diantara yang sangat sedikit.) (Toer 1995d) In a 1996 interview with Chris GoGwilt he declared, 'With the fall of Soekarno the Third World also fell apart.') (Toer 1996a, 158)
Following the fall of the Soeharto regime in May 1998 one of the symbols of tentative signs of artistic freedom beginning to emerge in Habibie's Indonesia was the republication of *Hoakiau di Indonesia* in late 1998

[2] Sneevliet arrived in the Indies in 1913. He began his career as a Catholic mystic but then turned to social-democratic revolutionary ideas and trade union activism. He later became the Comintern's agent in China under the alias G.Maring. See Ricklefs 1981, 163

> supernatural power with an insatiable appetite. And that power is none other than...capital.[1] (ASB, 95)

Minke begins to listen with a critical ear even to his liberal Dutch friends, suspecting that Ter Haar and Miriam may have a hidden agenda. The de la Croix family, for example, despite being so-called liberals, have difficulty in imagining a *pribumi* (Native) graduating from a European university: Herbert feels that the *pribumi* simply aren't as psychologically advanced as the Europeans: 'too often their judgment is clouded by sexual passion.'[2] (BM, 216-7) The Dutch so-called democrat Douwager expresses a similarly entrenched racism when he rejects Minke's nomination for editor of the *Boedi Oetomo* magazine, saying that 'the Natives are not yet ready to run a newspaper.'[3] (JL, 272)

Nyai Ontosoroh is particularly instrumental in de-essentialising Minke's admiration of Europe. While she encourages him to believe that Europe is where the future lies, she also takes it upon herself to modify his unquestioning faith in European civilisation:

> Don't put the entire European civilisation up on a pedestal. No matter where you go you will encounter good and evil, you'll come across saints and sinners. What's more, you'll discover sinners who look like saints and saints who look like sinners.[4] (ASB: 75)

Nyai Ontosoroh is the other character in the tetralogy who is empowered by *ilmu pengetahuan*. Her centrality to the texts is alluded to by Pramoedya in a 1996 interview:

> As a woman who stood up, alone, to the injustices of Dutch colonialism, she was a character who provided a model of resistance and courage for my fellow prisoners to look up to, so that their spirit would not be demoralized by the killings and the cruelties witnessed in the camps. (Toer 1996a, 155-6)

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[1] Inilah jaman modern, Minke. Yang tidak baru dianggap kolot, orang tani, orang desa. Orang menjadi begitu mudah terlena, bahwa di balik segala seruan, anjuran, kegilaan tentang yang baru menganga kekuatan gaib yang tak kenyang-kenyang akan mangsa. Kekuatan gaib itu adalah...modal.

[2] terlalu mudah hilang pertimbangannya yang baik terdesak oleh rangsang berahi.

[3] Pribumi belum mampu memimpin koran

[4] Jangan agungkan Eropa sebagai keseluruhan. Di manapun ada yang mulia dan jahat. Di manapun ada malaikat dan iblis. Di mana pun ada iblis bermuka malaikat, dan malaikat bermuka iblis.

She is, in Pramoedya's words 'the kind of person, of strong human being, that I hope will develop in Indonesia.' (Toer 1981b, 513)

While both Nyai Ontosoroh and 'the daughter of the Regent of J...' (Kartini) play an inspirational role in Minke's (as well as Pramoedya's) life[1], it is the former who comes closest to symbolising for him the spirit of the French Revolution. Her independence is the epitome for him of the ideal of liberty. Nyai later marries Jean Marais and returns with him to France. She says to Minke,

> I've been reading for so long about a country where everyone stands equal before the law. Not like here in the Indies. And they say that this country respects above all the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. I want to see that country for myself.[2] (JL, 198)

For Minke, Nyai Ontosoroh symbolises all that is illustrious about European learning. Despite the obstacles she faces by virtue of being a *pribumi* and a *nyai*, she is well-read and knowledgeable and she shuns the feudalism of Javanese culture when dealing with her workers. Minke, who initially finds it difficult to believe that anyone could gain an education outside the formal classroom-schoolmaster structure, is amazed to discover that Nyai is an autodidact, never having had any formal schooling. All her knowledge and wisdom have been acquired through her own efforts and through the patient and thorough tuition of her husband, before a mental breakdown led him to a life of debauchery. It was from Herman Mellema that Nyai learnt Malay and Dutch. Moreover, it was he who instilled in her a sense of self-respect and independence. The irony in the fact that Nyai owes so much to a man whom she now despises may be read as a metaphor for the relationship between the colony and the colonial power in general, and that between Minke and his mentor Europe in particular.

The accumulation of *ilmu pengetahuan*, then, is one way in which Minke recuperates agency, in the process affirming Pramoedya's own commitment to

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[1]See Pramoedya's *Panggil Aku Kartini Saja* Bukittinggi and Jakarta: N.V. Nusantara, 1962

[2]Sudah lama aku dengar dan aku baca ada suatu negeri di mana semua orang sama di depan Hukum. Tidak seperti di Hindia ini. Kata dongeng itu juga: negeri itu memashurkan, menjunjung dan memuliakan kebebasan, persamaan dan persaudaraan...Aku ingin melihat negeri dongengan itu dalam kenyataan.

the value of science and knowledge. The second way is through what he does with that *ilmu pengetahuan* - namely, write about it.

Recuperating agency through writing

There are compelling parallels between Minke's experiences and those of Pramoedya. Intimidated by his headmaster father at school and unable to succeed in the formal school system, Pramoedya, like Minke, decided to express himself by writing his thoughts and opinions down. For both, the move was to prove portentous.

Pramoedya's decision to illuminate the radical stream of Indonesian nationalism by basing his protagonist Minke on the journalist R.M. Tirtoadhisoerjo (1880-1915) suggests links with his own notion that writing is a "calling".[1] In 1903 Tirtoadhisoerjo established *Soenda Berita,* the first newspaper financed, managed, edited and published by Natives. He subsequently founded the journal *Medan Prijaji* which soon became the leading native newspaper of the day and a forum for not only the *priyayi* but, as its motto declared, the 'voice for all the [native] rulers, aristocrats, and intellectuals, *priyayi*, native merchants, and officers as well as merchants of other subordinated peoples made equal [in status] with the sons of the Country throughout the Dutch East Indies'.[2] (Toer 1985a, 47) As Shiraishi (1990, 34) says, Tirtoadhisoerjo was the first Native to move the "nation", 'through his language, the language with which he wrote in *Medan Prijaji.*'[3]

It is possible to postulate the semi-fictional Minke as a link between Multatuli and Pramoedya. The writings of Edward Douwes Dekker (using the pseudonym Multatuli), a former colonial official, which were directed against various aspects of the Forced Cultivation System, found great response among the people of The Netherlands. In 1860 Douwes Dekker published a novel called *Max*

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[1] Pramoedya has also written a biography of Tirtoadhisoerjo - *Sang Pemula* Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 1985

[2] Soeara bagai sekalian Radja-radja, Bangsawan asali dan fikiran, Prijajj dan saudagar Boemipoetra dan officier-officier serta saudagar-saudagar dari bangsa jang terprentah laenja jang dipersamakan dengan Anaknegri, di seloeroeh Hindia Olanda.

[3] For a commentary on the impact of the newspaper on native readers see Anderson 1990b, 26

Havelaar which greatly aided the final onslaught on the Forced Cultivation System and encouraged the liberalism that led to the Ethical Policy and inspired generations of Indonesian nationalists.[1] It has been suggested that in some ways *Anak semua bangsa* revisits Multatuli's concerns, within the much broader theme of nation-building.[2] Consistent with his 1960s views, Pramoedya invoked Multatuli in his acceptance speech for the Wertheim award in 1995, saying 'Multatuli was a great man, the greatest of Dutch humanists who said "The vocation of human beings is to be human."' (Toer 1996a, 156)

The idea that Pramoedya perhaps sees himself as a modern-day Tirtoadhisoerjo-Minke is strengthened in the light of his contention that 'the protagonist in a tale is none other than the I of the writer, the sun poised centrally above everything that it illuminates' (Toer 1983, 40) and that 'each work of literature is the autobiography of its author at a certain stage and in a certain context'.[3] (Toer 1995a, 230) Such a reading would enable a line to be drawn between the writings of Multatuli, which precipitated the end of the unjust Culture System in the East Indies, those of "Minke", who, inspired by Multatuli, began to unsettle some of the institutions of colonial power by calling out to his people through the written word, even from exile in Ambon, and Pramoedya, whose finest writing has always been written in, or inspired by, personal confinement.

Like his alter-ego Tirtoadhisoerjo, and like his creator Pramoedya, Minke becomes aware early that his writing ability is potentially a powerful gift. He comes to perceive writing as 'working for eternity' (*bekerja untuk keabadian*, ASB, 108). Magda Peters first recognises his writing talent and encourages him to go further with it, in an affirmation of the Enlightenment ideal that one should be able to express one's views publicly without fear of repression. Minke decides that he must answer his calling and use his writing as a means to both self-fulfilment and as a weapon against tyranny. Like Pramoedya, however, Minke learns that writing is

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[1] See Ricklefs 1981, 118

[2] See Sumarjo 1981a

[3] Setiap karya sastra adalah otobiografi pengarangnya pada tahap dan situasi tertentu.

potentially a dangerous activity. Many of the articles he writes in support of his oppressed countrymen remain unpublished, mirroring Pramoedya's own experience of censorship under three different regimes in Indonesia.

Although Pramoedya subscribed to the view that 'a literary work which has been created and presented to the public has a history of its own, independent of the history of its writer'[1] (Toer 1952c, 7), he nonetheless attributed to the writer a significant role in 'opposing oppression and tyranny' (*melawan penindasan, kezaliman*: Toer 1962). 'Literature is an assignment' (*Sastra adalah bertugas*), he wrote in 'Jang harus dibabat dan jang harus dibangun (III)'. Many years later, in a 1981 interview after his release from prison, he equated writing with making a contribution to his nation. 'Writing is my calling,' he wrote, 'a calling to offer everything I can to my nation.'[2] (Toer, 1981a) There is remarkable consistency in Pramoedya's views of the role of the writer over the forty-year period from the 1950s until the 1990s.

The role of the writer and the power of words in opposing oppression and tyranny is a pervasive theme of the tetralogy. It is a notion to which Pramoedya alluded when, during his arrest in 1965, he decided to use words rather than a weapon to defend himself:

> ...to give the thugs something they would remember all their lives: words which were more potent than weapons.[3]

He goes on,

> As a writer I still believe in the power of words over bullets, whose echoes only resound for a fraction of a minute or of a second.[4] (Toer, 1985b, 3)

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[1] suatu hasil kesusasteraan jang telah tertjipta dan telah pula disampaikan kepada masjarakat, dia punja sedjarah sendiri terlepas dari sedjarah pengarangnja

[2] Menulis adalah panggilan hidup saya. Panggilan untuk mempersembahkan segala sesuatu yang baik kepada *nation* saya.

[3] memberi gerombolan itu sesuatu yang mereka ingat seumur hidup: kata-kata yang lebih ampuh dari senjata

[4] Sebagai pengarang saya masih lebih percaya kepada kekuatan kata daripada kekuatan peluru yang gaungnya hanya akan berlangsung sekian bagian dari menit, bahkan detik.

Like Minke, prison walls have not been enough to contain Pramoedya: in what can be read as a powerful metaphor for the potential of contemporary democratic movements in Indonesia, these novels dare to demonstrate that oppression can be overcome, that, as Sartre puts it (in Memmi 1965, xxix), 'a people's misfortune will become its courage.' Both Minke and Pramoedya have been likened to the revolutionary Filipino writer Jose Rizal, an impassioned critic of Spanish colonialism who sought peaceful rectification of the feudal conditions in the Philippines and who has been enshrined as a national hero in that country.

The parallels between Pramoedya's and Minke's respective experiences of confinement and marginalisation are compelling. The circumstances surrounding Pramoedya's writing of the tetralogy have taken on almost mythical proportions. When the journalist Brian May, on a highly orchestrated visit to Buru Island in 1969, asked the Attorney-General Lieutenant-General Soegih Arto whether Pramoedya was allowed to write, his now-famous response was, 'He is allowed to write...But he has no pencil and paper.' (May 1978, 32) Pramoedya's response to this prohibition was to compose his novels orally and recite them to other prisoners. When a sympathetic general finally allowed him paper and pen, and then a typewriter, he copied down the novels from his own memory and what his prison mates could recall. They were thus born out of his prison experience, as were Minke's novels *Bumi manusia*, *Anak semua bangsa* and *Jejak langkah*, which he wrote in exile in Ambon and sent back to retired Police Commissioner Pangemanann, who reports on their contents in *Rumah kaca*.[1] Like Pramoedya, when Minke returns to Batavia he discovers that all his business interests have folded and that he is forbidden from getting involved in any political organisation. Pangemanann wryly observes that freedom 'is turning out to be an even more extreme exile for him.'[2] (RK, 321) It is an observation which would strike a chord

[1] The duties assigned to Pangemanann may be loosely based on those of Dr D.A. Rinkes, the deputy advisor for native affairs, to whom Idenburg entrusted the task of taming the *Sarekat Islam* and eliminating Tirtoadhisoerjo from the organisation. Of course the significant difference between Pangemanann and Rinkes is that Pangemanann is a Native.

[2] Kebebasannya berarti pembuangan yang ternyata lebih jauh lagi.

with Pramoedya himself; his "freedom" after 1979 was contingent upon a number of limitations on his personal mobility, including having the letters ET (*ex-TAPOL*, ex-political prisoner) stamped on his ID card, which was tantamount to being branded an outcast from society. Furthermore, as he says in the 1997 film 'The Great Post Road',

> They took away fourteen years of my freedom. My income was taken away from me...and my creative youth.

But like Minke, he refused to let such extreme exile break his spirit:

> But power cannot steal self-respect, personal pride, and everything that lives in people's hearts.[1] (Toer 1992, 7)

Similarly, Pangemanann makes the following observation of Minke's response to his "freedom":

> Perhaps the way he had answered me was also a way of showing the servant of the Government, this Pangemanann, that we could not rob him of everything. He had a big plan. And that plan was still inside his head.[2] (RK, 310-11)

Restoring agency to the people

Ilmu pengetahuan and his gift for writing have endowed Minke with what Pangemanann calls 'the same power that moved oceans, or caused volcanoes to erupt.'[3] (RK, 305) In *Jejak langkah* Minke embarks on a search for effective approaches for restoring agency to the *rakyat*, targeting three main strategies: mass organisation, boycott and erasing feudalistic Javanese cultural practice.

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[1] harus kutanggungkan begitu banyak ketidakadilan di tanahair sendiri, penganiayaan lahir-batin, perampasan kebebasan dari penghidupan, hak dan milik, penghinaan dan tuduhan, bahkan juga perampasan hak untuk membela diri melalui mass-media mau pun pengadilan...Sayang sekali kekuasaan tidak bisa merampas harga diri, kebanggaan diri, dan segala sesuatu yang hidup dalam batin siapa pun.

[2]Jawabannya yang terakhir itu barangkali juga sikapnya, yang menunjukkan pada hamba Gubermen, Pangemanann ini, bahwa tidak semua dapat dirampas dari dirinya. Ia sudah mempunyai rencana besar. Dan rencana itu masih ada dalam kepalanya.

[3]kekuatan dahsyat seperti samudra, seperti gunung berapi

Hendrik Frischboten describes boycott as 'power for the powerless'.[1] (JL, 255) The potential power of the boycott is demonstrated when Chinese businesses, first in Surabaya and then elsewhere, refuse to buy goods from European companies, resulting in large-scale bankruptcies. Minke is excited by the potential disruption which could be caused by a total boycott of the colonial government by a united Indies, and by the power such a boycott could deliver to the *rakyat*. He is inspired by the success of the Samin movement in which the peasants put a ban on the payment of taxes, as well as illegally clearing land and erecting buildings. Powerless to do anything about it, the government left them alone as long as they did not resort to violence. [2]

Another compelling new concept for Minke is *organisasi* (organisation). It is Ter Haar who first introduces Minke to the idea of the power of a modern organisation, a lesson which is continued by his second wife Ang San Mei and finally given more shape at a public lecture given by a retired doctor, a graduate of STOVIA.[3] While Kartini is still advocating education of children as the starting point for social change, Mei advocates mass organisations, backed by capital, as a more effective way of educating, and thereby restoring agency to the People. Minke learns that, using the THHK as a model, democratic goals can be achieved through legally-established organisations.[4] He responds to the old doctor's appeal to his audience to 'start organising, to educate the children, to prepare them for the modern era'[5] (JL, 119-120), to not get left behind by the Chinese and Arabs, who are already well advanced in working through organisations. Eventually his efforts pay off and

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[1] perwujudan kekuatan dari golongan lemah
The boycott was introduced to the Sarekat Islam by Tirtoadhisoerjo and Martodharsono. See Shiraishi 1990, 45

[2] See van Niel 1960, 82

[3] A character based on Dr Wahidin Soediraoesada, who was instrumental in setting up *Boedi Oetomo*

[4] In 1900 the Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan (THHK) was established in Batavia by Western-educated Chinese, and in 1901 it established the first Western-style THHK school. In a few years THHK schools were in operation all over the Indies. See Van Niel 1960, 87

[5] dimulai mendirikan organisasi sosial, memajukan anak-anak bangsa, mempersiapkan mereka memasuki jaman modern

he oversees the birth of his first organisation, the *Syarikat Priyayi*, whose members are educated *priyayi*.[1]

The next organisation with which Minke becomes involved, *Boedi Oetomo*, the brainchild of Minke's STOVIA friend Tomo, is an attempt to establish a more inclusive organisation, aiming as it does to include all Javanese in its membership.[2] Minke, however, becomes disillusioned by the cultural and linguistic chauvinism that has informed the development of *Boedi Oetomo*: and, armed with the conviction that some sort of pan-Indies organisation is needed, he decides to set up a multi-racial organisation, with Malay as its official language, catering for the needs of traders and based on Islam. Out of this is born the *Sarekat Dagang Islamiya*h (SDI), the Islamic Traders' Association.[3] The power of the SDI resides not only in its numbers but in the diversity of its members - railway workers, teachers and women's groups, as well as traders.

But organisation and boycott on their own will not deliver empowerment to the people. Having established the ground-rules for boycott and organisation, Minke's role is largely one of breaking down the barriers which have cemented his people in feudalism - barriers such as the Javanese language and title system, the people's reliance on the *Mahabharata* as a guide to life, and irrelevant superstitions. It is a mission dear to Pramoedya's heart. Never having written a page in his native Javanese tongue, he dismisses many of the cultural traditions valued by his *priyayi* family:

> The court poets of Java consolidated the culture of *tepo seliro* (knowing one's place), the awareness of one's social status *vis a vis*

[1]In 1906 Tirtoadhisoerjo founded *Sarekat Prijaji*, an organisation whose aim was to promote the education of the sons of the *priyayi*. It was this initiative which prompted Pramoedya to dub Tirto 'Sang Pemula' ('The Pioneer'). See Adam 1989

[2]*Boedi Oetomo* was founded in 1908 on the initiative of a group of STOVIA students. *Boedi Oetomo* is generally regarded as being the first Indonesian organisation organised along Western lines. Although some commentators regard the establishment of the *Boedi Oetomo* as marking the birth of the nationalist movement, others regard it as being very limited, as it only supported the advancement of one ethnic group in the Indies, and was welcomed by Governor-General van Heutsz as a sign of the success of the Ethical Policy. It was precisely what he wanted: a moderately progressive indigenous organisation controlled by enlightened officials. Throughout its life the organisation often seemed in fact to be a quasi-official government party.

[3]In Batavia in 1909 Tirtoadhisoerjo founded the *Sarekat Dagang Islamiyah*, modelled after the *Sianghwee* (Chinese Chamber of Commerce)

> Power according to its hierarchy, from life within the family to the pinnacle of power. ... (I)n Javanese culture the evaluation and reevaluation of culture has never taken place. (Toer 1996a, 2)

It is this 'evaluating and reevaluating' of culture and its entrenched power structures which Pramoedya perceives as one of his roles as a writer, a role he bequeaths to Minke in the tetralogy. Pramoedya laments the fact that the Javanese literary tradition is dominated by the *wayang* which draws on the Hindu epics the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* (or what he calls 'the Javanese versions and their chewed-over wads'. (1996, 1) He describes the *Mahabharata* as 'a gigantic construction consisting of philosophical and ethical stories, religious references and, naturally, social and political prescriptions'.[1] (1992, 1) His disdain for the *wayang* as a vehicle for storytelling is suggested in his dismissive comment:

> To this day I cannot imagine how a writer can "hitch himself" to the authority of already-existing protagonists, for example (above all) those of the wayang stories. (Toer 1983, 40)

He reiterated this in a 1996 interview, declaring, 'I have long abandoned the wayang concepts.' (Toer 1996b)

But it is the Dutch archivist in *Rumah kaca* (306) who delivers perhaps the most ruthless diatribe on Javanese cultural traditions:

> If one day you get the chance to talk with an educated Javanese, get him into a conversation about *wayang* and *keris*, then praise the sophistication of the *gamelan* and Javanese dance...and then tell him how advanced Javanese philosophy and metaphysics is. If he reacts with enthusiasm and agrees with all your praise, it means he will never achieve anything despite all his education.[2]

In the "century of the People" Minke's mission of restoring agency to the *rakyat* is threefold: promoting boycott and organisation and erasing feudalistic cultural traditions.

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[1] sebuah bangunan raksasa yang terdiri dari cerita falsafi dan tatasusila, acuan-acuan religi, dan dengan sendirinya resep-resep sosial dan politik

[2] Kalau pada suatu kali bertemu dengan seorang Jawa yang terpelajar, cobalah ajak dia bicara tentang keris, wayang, puji-pujilah ketinggian gamelan dan tarinya...pujilah ketinggian filsafatnya, kebatinannya. Kalau dia menjadi antusias dan membenarkan puji-pujian Tuan, dia tidak akan mencapai sesuatu apa pun dengan keterpelajarannya.

Reading the tetralogy as historical fiction

Upon its publication Bumi *Manusia* was lauded by some critics as being the antidote to a perceived vacuum in Indonesian literature at the time:

> In a single blow, Pramoedya has, with this novel, given new life to a paralysed Indonesian literature, which has recently been marked by either a frenzied concern with technical innovation, an obsession with the spiritual barrenness and instability of the social outcast, or a decline into cheap, vulgar pop-fiction.[1] (Parakitri 1980)

The novel was acclaimed as the narrative of nation Indonesia had been waiting for: a novel in the historical realist tradition which revealed the story of their colonial past to readers born in post-independence Indonesia. It represented Pramoedya's invitation to all Indonesians, whatever their level of education, ('from primary school graduates to professors'[2]) to 'live in history' (*hidup di dalam histori*). (Toer 1981a) It was hailed as a 'breath of fresh air' (*angin segar*, Armada 1981) and 'a brilliant work' (*karya gemilang*), the calibre of which had never before been produced in Indonesia.[3] Vice-President Adam Malik also initially welcomed the novel enthusiastically, declaring that it should be compulsory reading for the younger generation of Indonesians, as it would give them an insight into the dynamics of colonialism as experienced by their grandparents.[4] However, only months after its publication the government censor invoked the established 'ban on all activities aimed at spreading or encouraging to flourish the concepts or teachings of Communism/Marxism-Leninism'.[5] *Bumi manusia*, along with its sequel *Anak semua bangsa* were withdrawn from circulation. (One reviewer pointed out the irony in the fact that *Bumi manusia*, a powerful indictment of colonialism, was printed in Holland after its

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[1] Dengan novel ini Pramoedya sekali hantam telah mencairkan kebekuan sastra Indonesia yang belakangan ini hanyut berputar-putar dalam inovasi-inovasi teknik, berpilin-pilin dalam kegelisahan dan kekosongan jiwa perseorangan yang terisolasi dari persoalan masyarakatnya, atau merosot dalam kesenangan murahan yang bernama pop.

[2] dari lulusan SD hingga profesor

[3] 'Masih Sekitar *Bumi manusia*' *Memorandum* 44 9 November 1980

[4] 'Masih Sekitar *Bumi manusia*' *Memorandum* 44 9 November 1980

[5] From a statement by the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Indonesia, 29 May 1981

banning in Indonesia.[1]) The third and fourth novels in the cycle suffered the same fate upon publication. Coordinating Minister for Security, Sudomo, described *Rumah kaca* as 'a form of instruction and a point of reference for Communist cadres and sympathisers.'[2] Possession of these novels remains a crime in Indonesia, punishable by a prison sentence, and the Attorney General maintained until recently that the novels were 'poisonous and very possibly could create public unrest'. (James 1996)

The controversy surrounding the publication of the novels was heightened by the fact that they were written by Pramoedya, a writer who inspired suspicion and loathing in some quarters on account of his involvement in the 1950s and 1960s with Lekra. All of his works had been subjected to a blanket ban after his imprisonment by the New Order government; any new publication by him was destined to arouse curiosity, controversy and polarised opinions.

The texts are both internally and externally referential. Much of their appeal lies in the fact that, as Tickell suggests (1986, 30), they can ask 'What if historical figure X met figure Y? What would they say?' As Lukacs (1962, 63) says of Walter Scott's fiction, Pramoedya allows his characters 'to express feelings and thoughts about real, historical relationships in a much clearer way than the actual men and women of the time could have done.'

As Tickell points out, "what if" is a mode not available to regular history. Neither is the externally referential "what if?" a mode normally available to fiction, which is largely self-referential and whose protagonists function as 'inwardly complex agent(s) out of whose human complexity evolve the event and the destiny'. (Van Ghent 1953, 124) In attempting to blend the historical and the fictional, the writer of historical fiction faces the difficult task of steering a path between unmediated history and protagonist-centred fiction. Pramoedya hints at the difficulty of this task when he says he had to take care 'not to overburden the story. To make

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[1] 'Dari Bumi Manusia ke Rumah Kaca' *Mingguan Malaysia* 16.11.80

[2] salah satu bentuk instruksi sekaligus referensi bagi kader dan simpatisan PKI (cited in 'Jaksa Agung: "Rumah Kaca" Dinyatakan Terlarang' *Jayakarta* 10 June 1988)

sure that the tree was not laden down by too many branches.' [1] (Toer 1980) As Lukacs (1962, 41-2) points out:

> ...the historical novel presents the writer with a specially strong temptation to try and produce an extensively complete totality. The idea that only such completeness can guarantee historical fidelity is very persuasive one. But it is a delusion...

Some of the critical response to *Bumi manusia* suggests that the critics brought to it many of the expectations they would bring to fiction.[2] For example, Umar Junus's disappointment at what he perceives as the lack of psychological depth in the characters in *Bumi manusia* (1981, 28-29) may reflect more about his approach to reading the novel than the novel itself. Junus clearly wants the characters to be 'inwardly complex agent(s)'.

Hegel's assertion (cited in Lukacs 1962, 53) that 'the historical is only then ours...when we can regard the present in general as a consequence of those events in whose chain the characters or deeds represented constitute an essential link' is echoed in a 1981 interview with Pramoedya, when, in response to a question about why he wanted to write historical books, he said:

> Because there is a tendency in Indonesia not to look at the past. And yet we are products of the past... I have tried to carry out an evaluation and (a) reevaluation of the past as it is relevant to the present. (Toer 1981b, 513)

His comment reflects a conviction that we are all historical beings, and can only understand ourselves with reference to our past. He is thus not merely aiming to depict the past as history, but rather to represent the historical process as a means of understanding the present.

This is in part the key to the controversy surrounding the publication of these novels. They did not fit nicely into the prevailing hegemony's idea of

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[1] supaya beban cerita jangan terlampau banyak. Supaya tidak terlampau banyak daun dalam batang pohon.

[2] Shaw (1983, 34) provides an interesting example of what he terms such an 'error of reading' in his analysis of Dorothy van Ghent's reading of Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian.* He comments, 'she tries to rewrite his novel, wishing it were *Pride and Prejudice* or *Measure for Measure.*

"literature"; they broke down many of the barriers between literature, history, sociology, economics and politics. (Heryanto 1984a) The first three novels announce themselves as *roman* ("novel")[1] and Pramoedya himself has said that *Bumi manusia* is a 'novel'. (Toer 1980) Yet to read them as pure fiction is largely misguided. Junus laments (1981, 32),

> On the one hand there is an assertion that this novel [*Bumi manusia*] is a work of fiction. But on the other hand there is an assertion that it is based on reality. We are never sure whether the story is in fact imaginary or based on fact.[2]

Unlike works of pure fiction, these novels are not ultimately concerned with the moral or psychological life of the protagonists. Many of the characters are simplified: psychological complexity is not required in a character whose primary purpose is utilitarian: to function as a historical representative. The liberal Dutch (Kommer, Ter Haar, the de la Croix family, Magda Peters), the Chinese radicals Ah Khouw and Ang San Mei and the vindictive *Indo* Robert Suurhof are all "historical markers" rather than fully developed characters.

Historical references are not included to add local colour; they are, rather the focus of the action. Yet much of the critical response to the novels betrays a concern that they do not display the features of the modern psychological novel. Junus (1981, 28-9) accuses Pramoedya of manipulating his 'character types' to illustrate Minke's Marxist championing of the oppressed over the oppressor:

> No human factor plays any role in their actions. They are all judged solely from the point of view of class. The oppressors act like oppressors, without any humanitarian dimension. The oppressed are forced to accept defeat without relinquishing their fighting spirit.[3]

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[1] The fourth novel, *Rumah kaca*, is described as *sebuah roman sejarah* ('an historical novel')

[2] Pada satu pihak ada usaha untuk menyatakan novel ini sebagai khayalan. Tapi pada pihak lain ada usaha untuk menyatakan ia berdasarkan suatu realiti. Kita tidak pasti apakah ceritanya semata-mata imaginasi atau berdasarkan suatu realiti.

[3] Tidak ada faktor kemanusiaan ikut campur dalam tindakan mereka. Semuanya diperhitungkan dari segi kepentingan kelas masing-masing. Penindas bertindak sebagai seorang penindas tanpa ada pertimbangan kemanusiaan. Yang ditindas terpaksa menerima kekalahan tanpa perlu kehilangan semangat penentangan.

Class, he maintains, has turned all the characters into robots. (He also painstakingly elaborates the many examples in *Bumi manusia* of the oppressed class being treated like animals - variously dogs, chickens, molluscs, monkeys, worms, crabs, prawns, lions, termites and cows. {Junus 1981, 13})

Junus's somewhat simplistic dismissal of Pramoedya's characterisation is predicated upon an implicit assumption that one of the criteria for judging the literary merit of these novels is the complexity of their characters. He fails to allow for the interaction of human motivation with social and historical forces. But historical causality is more important than complexity of character in the historical novel. As with the historical novels of Walter Scott, 'history occurs on a concrete, day-to-day basis' (Shaw 1983, 136) in these novels. Minke's meeting with Nyai Ontosoroh is to prove a turning point for him, as is his visit to the Trunodongso family, his meeting with Ter Haar on the boat to Batavia, his decision to leave STOVIA and take up journalism. Junus, in his search for psychological complexity in the novels' protagonists, overlooks their historical texture.

Fiction as history; history as fiction

A reading of the novels as historical fiction, however, did not help to dispel the controversy surrounding them. Ali Said, head of the Jakarta Supreme Court, confirmed this in his comment about *Rumah kaca*:

> If you read it as a novel and take it no further, there's no problem. However, it's when you take it further that it starts to get dangerous.[1]

The idea that work of historical fiction can indeed take on a life of its own is alluded to by Pramoedya, who has likened such a literary work to 'an infant that on its own begins to grow in the superstructure of the life of its readers' society.'[2]

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[1] Jika dibaca sebagai novel saja dan tak ada kelanjutannya memang tidak apa-apa. Akan tetapi kalau ada kelanjutannya akan berbahaya. (See 'Ketua MA Ali Said: "Rumah Kaca" adalah Kritik Oto Kritik PKI' *Jayakarta* 10 June 1988)

[2] bayi yang memulai perkembangannya sendiri dalam bangunan-atas kehidupan masyarakat pembacanya

(Toer 1992, 3) Ali Said may well have been acknowledging the guidance and control needed to make sure that such infants do not become wayward.

The way in which an individual reader responds to historical fiction stems in part from his or her view of "history". The reader who conceives of history as a coherent process whose meaning can be represented aesthetically will accord greater significance to historical fiction than the reader for whom history is little more than unmitigated flux. (Shaw 1983, 46) The extent of official and critical response to Pramoedya's novels suggests an awareness of the mimetic power of the historical novel, the notion that, as Lukacs puts it (1962, 124), realist art represents a form of knowledge which presents 'a different, but no less truthful picture of reality than does natural science.' Hostile critics like Junus, once they had reconciled themselves to the fact that they were reading "historical" rather than "standard" novels, begin to perceive the mimetic power of the novels as potentially dangerous. Junus (1981, 30) thus condemns Pramoedya's novels for their Marxist teachings and for their amorality. He expresses outrage at the fact that Annelies and Minke were lovers before their marriage, with the tacit consent of Nyai Ontosoroh. He is strongly critical of the fact that, in his view, the characters are motivated solely by class, with no concept of sin or morality and he interprets Minke's rejection of his father as symptomising the novel's lack of moral impetus. What Minke and Pramoedya would regard as a symbolic rejection of the shackles of feudalism, Junus sees as a shattering of a time-honoured relationship. Other official response to this incident condemned it as being "anti-Pancasila" - in a Pancasila state no child would reject his or her own parent. Nyai Ontosoroh, too, had refused to acknowledge her father after he sold her off into concubinage. Her father's materialistic motives for his action seem to be overlooked in the criticism of the novel which denounces Nyai's "anti-Pancasilaist" rejection of her father.

The Indonesian High Court denounced *Rumah kaca* for undermining religious values, citing the following comment from Pangemanann (RK, 29):

> Why do we have to get all sentimental about death? Simply because, from an early age, we've been pumped full of fairy tales about devils, angels, hell and heaven? It's all simply speculation and it remains nothing but speculation.[1]

Upon the banning of *Bumi manusia*, the chairperson of the Makassar Arts Council declared that it defiled 'the eternal moral values of the Pancasila',[2] and the High Court determined that Pangemanann's suggestion that Javanese has no word for "justice" (RK, 174) constituted an attack on the moral values of the nation.[3] By the same token, however, another critic sought to demonstrate that *Bumi manusia* represents an affirmation of the Pancasila, pointing out that Minke and Nyai's struggle is inspired not by Marxism, but by a Multatuli-derived humanism which accords with "Pancasilaist" principles. (Muryanto n.d.)

Junus (1981, 32-3) regards *Bumi manusia* as a potentially dangerous example for the young readership at whom the novel is aimed.[4] (In 1980 Pramoedya said, 'I wanted to attract a young readership. And to hold their attention so they want to go on to the next volume.' {Toer 1980}) Junus is concerned that, 'never having experienced the evils of Communism', these young readers may be influenced by its propaganda after reading this book. Other critics were able to seize upon utterances and statements in the novel which were "obviously" Marxist-inspired. The following one-line comment by Nyai Ontosoroh, for example, was interpreted as referring to the PKI's activities in Indonesia. When Minke and Nyai appear to be defeated by the colonial system she says, 'My son, we have resisted as well and as honourably as possible.'[5] (BM, 354) This utterance was described as 'poisonous'.[6] Robert Suurhof's very troubled relationship with Minke was also one of the official reasons for the banning of the novel, on the grounds that his attacks on Minke

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[1] Mengapa mesti sentimental terhadap kematian? Hanya karena sejak kecil dipompakan dongeng tentang iblis, malaikat, neraka dan surga? Segalanya tafsiran semata dan tetap tinggal tafsiran.

[2] quoted in *TAPOL*, no 46, July 1981

[3] See 'Jaksa Agung: "Rumah Kaca" Dinyatakan Terlarang'

[4] Saya mau menarik angkatan muda untuk membaca ini. Untuk dibawa ke jilid selanjutnya.

[5] Kita telah melawan, Nak, Nyo, sebaik-baiknya, sehormat-hormatnya.

[6] see *TAPOL* no 46 July 1981 p.2

resembled PKI practices.[1] *Rumah kaca* in turn was charged with being provocative because of comments from Pangemanann like the following which, although in the context of the narrative itself, emerge as a criticism of 1980s Indonesia:

> All the corrupt big fish band together to become the power-brokers. All the corrupt little fish spread themselves around and they, too, play a part in poisoning their environment.[2] (RK, 39-40)

The following contemplation by Pangemanann on the notion of 'a fair day's pay for a fair day's work' was also regarded as promulgating Marxism:

> In every sector of the work force individuals are emerging to tell us that human labour is the most important thing, not machinery and not capital, and that therefore human labour must be rewarded with a fair wage.[3] (RK: 261)

The emergence in *Rumah kaca* of long-silenced revolutionary figures like Mas Marco prompted the High Court to condemn the novel for its "agitative" elements. Pangemanann says of Marco,

> He discovered and began to espouse the credo of "solidarity and equality", which quickly spread to all corners of the archipelago, even to the jungles of Borneo. With this new credo he succeeded in conveying a new point of view to the masses: challenging the rich and the civil servants, irrespective of their skin colour, he planted the seeds of anarchy.[4] (RK: 190)

Even in his destitute state at the end of *Rumah kaca* Minke was perceived by the High Court as constituting a threat to stability and harmony in the Indonesia of the 1980s. His refusal to sign an agreement that he will not become

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[1] see *TAPOL* No 44 March 1981 p.3

[2] Semua ikan besar busuk mengelompok jadi pelaksana kekuasaan. Semua ikan kecil busuk bertebaran dalam kehidupan dan ikut membusukinya. (See 'Jaksa Agung: "Rumah Kaca" Dinyatakan Terlarang')

[3] Dalam setiap sektor kerja produksi dan jasa bermunculan pribadi-pribadi yang mengajarkan, bahwa tenaga manusialah yang terpenting, bukan mesin bukan pula uang, maka tenaga manusia harus diganti dengan upah yang layak.

[4] Ia menemukan dan mulai meniupkan pameo *sama rata sama rasa* yang dengan cepatnya mulai menjalar ke seluruh pelosok Hindia, malahan sampai di hutan-hutan Borneo. Dengan pameo itu ia telah berhasil memberikan sikap baru pada orang kebanyakan: menentang semua orang kaya dan semua pejabat, tak peduli warna kulitnya, dia menanamkan benih anarki...
Mas Marco composed a poem entitled 'Sama Rasa dan Sama Rata' which soon became the catch cry of the *pergerakan*. For the text of the poem, and a discussion of its implications see Shiraishi 1990, 88-90

involved in politics or "organisations" (RK: 314) was read by the High Court as providing 'practical instructions about organisation' (*petunjuk organisasi praktis*).[1]

Such reactions suggest an awareness of the high degree of probability in the novels. In his study of Walter Scott's historical fiction Shaw (1983, 21-22) distinguishes between the internal and external probability of an historical novel. Internal probability, while it may provide an entry point for the reader into the past, points inward, to the way in which the work is structured. External probability, on the other hand, resides in the depiction of societies, modes of speech or events that actually existed in the past and thus points outwards to the world it represents. Probability thus serves referential ends. Part of the power of Pramoedya's tetralogy, as Junus and other critics must realise, lies in the fact that it is both internally and externally probable. If the task of history is to explain the present, as Pramoedya suggests, then these novels may well be perceived as insidious in contemporary Indonesia, because of their external probability. They dare to suggest that Minke may be a model for contemporary revolutionaries, that 'all the activities of the modern Natives will follow in his footsteps.' The other part of the power of the novels resides in the fact that they in fact go beyond simple external probability, because they clearly depict the present as being in the past. This has not escaped the hostile critics of Pramoedya's novels who, for all their apparent paranoia, ironically have perceived the power of such a depiction.

Furthermore, the aspects of the tetralogy which are fictional are nonetheless rendered "probable" by dint of the high level of external probability that adheres to other parts of the novel. Because so many of Minke's experiences are based on historical fact, for instance, it is easy as a reader to assume that those ostensibly fictional experiences (or at least the ones which are harder to verify historically), such as his relationship with Nyai Ontosoroh, are also "true". Moreover, in Lukacsian terms Minke, as a representative of a particular historical milieu (and being based on a true character), is historically "typical". A particularly

[1] See ‘Jaksa Agung: "Rumah Kaca” Dinyatakan Terlarang’

significant moment in the tetralogy occurs towards the end of *Rumah kaca* when, upon his return from exile, Minke is addressed by a taxi driver as 'Mr T.A.S.' which, as Pangemanann notes is 'His real name, his name since birth'.[1] (RK, 304) Having had Minke's true character thus revealed, the effect is to invite a re-reading of all that has preceded this moment, in order to ascertain what else might be "true". Historical significance is thus central to his character and he promotes historical meaning much more directly than a character who is simply historically "probable".[2]

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My reading in this chapter has foregrounded the ways in which Pramoedya's tetralogy is constituted by the socio-cultural conditions in which it was produced. It does this by examining a number of 'complex affiliations'. (Said 1994, 13)

The first of these affiliations devolves from the presence of the authorial voice in the texts. My reading foregrounds a significant degree of similitude between the voice of the protagonist Minke, and his alter-ego Tirtoadhisoerjo, and that of Pramoedya.

The second affiliation is that between the novels and their historical setting - the connections between what Pramoedya calls 'a downstream reality' (*kenyataan hilir*) and an 'upstream reality...an historical reality' (*kenyataan hulu...kenyataan historis*). (Toer 1992, 3) Drawing on Shaw and Lukacs I suggest that a reading of the texts as historical fiction produces different literary works than does a reading of them as pure fiction. This difference of approach is then used to analyse some of the critical response to the novels.

My reading also examines the complex affiliations between Pramoedya, his tetralogy and literary politics in Indonesia - an arena over which he seems to have acquired a sort of invisible franchise. His status as a writer and as a

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[1] nama asli Minke sejak kelahiran

[2] This notion of 'typicality' in historical fiction derives from Lukacs in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* and is discussed at some length by Shaw 1983 33, 41-45, 101, 122

controversial political figure has had considerable influence on the way in which his novels have been received and read. The widespread attention claimed by the novels, in terms of retail sales, critical response and their ultimate banning, is indicative of the fact that their publication foregrounded a number of binomial oppositions in New Order Indonesia. First, there is the long-standing tension in literary circles, always close to the surface, between proponents of political engagement in literature and proponents of "universal humanism". Second there is the tension, which does not necessarily parallel the first, between supporters and detractors of Pramoedya as a political figure. Finally there is the tension between politically engaged writers and a neo-colonial government which routinely silenced dissenting voices. (It should be noted that at the time of writing, some months after Habibie became president of Indonesia, there were tentative signs that some "no-go" areas of Indonesian history, such as the events surrounding the 1965 attempted coup, may be re-opened for discussion.) These binomial oppositions have engendered a lively and sometimes acrimonious debate as to whether the novels are great works of historical realism or merely Marxist-Leninist propaganda, tools for educating future generations of Indonesians or poison for their minds. In an environment in which stability and harmony are still predicated upon acceptance of the official version of history (which in Pramoedya's view conveniently omits 'anything remotely embarrassing', *segala faktor yang memalukan*, {Toer 1992, 1}) that debate, and the binomial oppositions underpinning it, seem set to continue.

My reading in this chapter has thus foregrounded the material conditions of the novels' production. The privileging of those elements has, following Fish, endowed the text with a certain set of meanings. My re-reading of the novels in chapter six will privilege different features and hence endow them with a different set of meanings.

In the next chapter I undertake a contextual reading of selected novels by Y.B. Mangunwijaya, a writer who weaves notions of nationhood into his narratives in a markedly different way than does Pramoedya.

CHAPTER THREE

NARRATIVES OF NATION (II) - NEO-REGIONALISM

> There is always a "good" and a "bad" nationalism. There is the one which tends to construct a state or a community and the one which tends to subjugate, to destroy; the one which refers to right and the one which refers to might; the one which tolerates other nationalisms and which may even argue in their defence and include them within a single historical perspective...and the one which radically excludes them in an imperialist and racist perspective. There is the one which derives from love...and the one which derives from hate. (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, 47)

The re-emergence of the old deep-seated ideological conflicts in the period 1980-1995 was accompanied by another phenomenon, namely the revitalisation and reinterpreting of regional cultural traditions. This may have evolved from renewed debate in the late 1970s and early 1980s between those who believed that Indonesian "national culture" should be imbued with precolonial "indigenous" civilisation and those who argued the need for a more eclectic, plural and cosmopolitan base. (Geertz 1990, 89) The debate was familiar, representing a rekindling of many of the issues discussed in the cultural polemics of the 1930s. A sense of regionalism had also been present during the process of shaping a new Indonesian tradition in the 1950s, a process which was generated in part as a reaction

to the perceived "Europeanness" of many of the *Angkatan 45* writers and in part because of the material circumstances of the postwar generation, the majority of whom spoke no European languages and had not received a Dutch education.

However, the approach in the eighties and early nineties seemed to be a much more self-conscious and deliberate strategy on the part of the writers and artists, who are now writing within a national tradition that is largely removed from the regions. They are now able to stand back from their regional cultures and, in some cases, reinterpret and interrogate some of the premises of those traditions. Furthermore, the process of reinvigorating regional traditions in the 1980s was sanctioned by the government, which established "spiritual resources" policies aimed at conserving and developing regional cultural traditions as symbols of security, stability and time-honoured values in the face of 'the commodity and consumerist-based culture' which is an inevitable side-effect of the rapid economic development of New Order Indonesia. (Foulcher 1990, 302) Cultural activity became the appropriate arena for the celebration of regional diversity. As Geertz points out (1990, 79), homogeneity is the goal in the realm of politics but it is now acceptable for variation ("spiritual richness") to be expressed in the non-politicised realm of culture. Regional performances are, however, subjected to a censorship of sorts, in that any anti-modern, anti-development elements are eliminated from Government-sponsored public performances. This is a manifestation of what Pemberton (1994, 7) calls an 'ambiguous, interiorized form of repression that makes the apparent normality of everyday life conceivable, desirable'.

Contemporary performances using regional traditions to convey controversial topical messages may be subject to the censor's black pen. In 1990, for example, Teater Koma's play *Suksesi*, which used *wayang* imagery to satirise the issue of presidential succession, was banned. On the other hand, in government-sponsored theatre festivals in Yogyakarta regional groups take part in competitions to perform skits promoting aspects of state policy. Rituals and cultural icons considered appropriate by the national regime are given the official stamp of

approval by being incorporated into the state apparatus through, for example, architecture. (In the West Sumatran capital of Padang, for example, new government buildings are built in the spectacularly distinctive Minangkabau style.) Extravagant displays of regional music and dances are also performed on appropriate occasions at state functions.[1] In Jakarta the cultures of all twenty seven provinces are on display at Taman Mini Indonesia, a massive government-funded theme park designed to introduce both domestic and foreign visitors to the most visually exciting aspects of those cultures. Taman Mini Indonesia is designed to symbolise both the government's support of regional diversity (at least at the visual and decorative level) and its success in maintaining harmony among such diverse cultures.[2] Regional cultures are thus redefined and remodelled by the state, and hence obtain their legitimacy. In the process, however, they are effectively disempowered. As Geertz demonstrates (1990, 93-94), 'neo-traditionalism' (the state-endorsed 'officialised culture', the 'academised culture' of the universities and the 'commercialised culture' of tourist destinations) differs markedly from the 'traditionalism' of cultural performances as they are still performed at the local level. Pemberton comments (1994, 15),

> What appears to remain is a purely *tradisional* culture free of political and historical implications, a culture dedicated to, as if by nature, its own celebration.[3]

Actors and writers have sometimes appropriated regional cultural traditions in ways not envisioned by the New Order government. While officially-sponsored performances serve to sanction "variation" in a non-political manner, artists are using local traditions to challenge the official interpretation of contemporary issues. For example, when asked why he used traditional mythology

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[1] In September 1996 I attended a function at a 5 star hotel in Jakarta to officially inaugurate a new Ambonese hero. No expense was spared in entertaining the guests with lavish dance and music performances, and the Minister for Tourism, Joop Ave, who addressed the guests with a few words of Ambonese, was welcomed in traditional Ambonese fashion. I was told that such occasions, honouring regional heroes, are held regularly in the capital city.

[2] For a discussion of what he terms 'Mini-isation', see Pemberton 1994, 12-14

[3] Pemberton (1994) provides a thorough analysis of the way in which New Order cultural discourse has enframed "traditional rituals". See especially chapters 5 to 7.

in his performances, Bambang Wiyono, the director of *Teater Surakarta*, replied that this was the medium through which he could best comment on contemporary issues of political power. (Hatley 1993, 63)

The incorporation of traditional legends, local history, music, dance and regional languages is also evident in contemporary Indonesian literature written in the early 1980s. Arief Budiman coined the expression *neo-sastra daerah* ("neo-regional literature") for this phenomenon of both language use and the expression of local values. Lindsay comments (1982, 1):

> The writers who are discussed on the seminar circuit in Indonesia as participating in this phenomenon of "multilingualism" or *neo-sastra daerah* are all Central Javanese, and thus all mix Javanese with Indonesian in varying proportions in their writing styles....the prose writers are Umar Kayam, Y.B. Mangunwijaya and Linus Suryadi AG. The works which have attracted the most attention are two books published in 1981, *Pengakuan Pariyem* by Linus Suryadi AG and *Burung-burung manyar* by Y.B. Mangunwijaya.

While the use of regional languages in art and literature may be officially tolerated, this tolerance is nonetheless underpinned by a concern that *bahasa Indonesia* remains the language of education, bureaucracy and the media - in short, fields where social control is enacted. This is done through the Centre for Language Development and Cultivation (*Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa*), which determines what constitutes "good and correct" Indonesian and which guards against the unnecessary incorporation of foreign and regional words into the national language.

As Lindsay (1982, 3) points out, despite the official tolerance of the limited use of regional languages for cultural expression, the introduction of regional elements into contemporary Indonesian fiction has sparked concerns in some quarters that the national identity may be under threat due to this "return to regionalism". It is a concern which Suryadi (1982, 35) contemptuously dismisses:

> It is only narrow-minded thinkers and intellectuals who constantly worry about the degradation of the Indonesian language...The view that Indonesian literature must be written in pure Indonesian, and

> must not be tainted by regional vocabulary of any kind ... in fact suggests an intellectual impasse and is really no more than a continuation of pre-Independence abstract ideas.[1]

Heryanto offers a more politicised interpretation of the preoccupation with the promotion and management of *bahasa Indonesia*. He sees it as part of a far-reaching program of social control, in which 'language becomes an all-pervasive agent of cultural hegemony, strengthening the position and nature of the state in so far as it gives social existence to the realities it transmits'. (cited in Foulcher 1990, 305)

Wayang

The regional genre most frequently appropriated by contemporary fiction writers in Indonesia is the Javanese *wayang,* 'the very prototype of classical traditional art, even that culmination of classical traditional art called *adiluhung*'. (Mulyono 1977, 15) Many Javanese claim that the *wayang* stories are not merely entertainment; they claim to have internalised the stories to the point where watching a *wayang* play puts them back in touch with an essential part of their being. Nadjib (1994, 59), for example says,

> For Javanese people, watching *wayang* doesn't simply mean "watching art". They don't watch it merely for its own sake. They do it rather to fortify something purer, deeper, something more profound, something within their very souls. Maybe it reinforces their values, or their view of the world or their relationship with others. Maybe watching the *wayang* helps reinforce their belief in the truth...[2]

Sears's 1996 study, *Shadows of empire*, suggests, however, that this foregrounding of the mystical value of the *wayang* over the stories being told can be

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[1] Hanya pemikir dan intelektuil picik yang selalu kuwatir terjadinya degradasi bahasa Indonesia... Pola berpikir yang menyatakan bahwa, karya sastra Indonesia harus bersih bahasa Indonesianya dan tidak bisa tercampuri kosa-kata dari manapun asalnya ... pada hakekatnya adalah pernyataan yang buntu pandangan, macet pikiran dan hanya melanjutkan idea abstrak dari masa sebelum merdeka.

[2] ...orang-orang Jawa itu 'nonton wayang, tidaklah dalam rangka 'nonton kesenian'. Tidak untuk berhenti pada wayang itu sendiri. Melainkan untuk meneguhkan kembali sesuatu yang lebih dalam, lebih inti, dan lebih murni dalam jiwa manusia mereka. Mungkin falsafah nilai, mungkin sikap hidup, mungkin kekariban bersama. Mungkin nonton wayang ialah semacam latihan memelihara keyakinan akan kebenaran...

traced to a colonial construction of the meaning of *wayang*. Sears believes that Dutch scholars, generally of the opinion that *wayang* was an elite tradition that became "corrupted" when it was let out of the courts, attempted to reconstitute it as 'the essence of a lost high culture'. (Sears 1996, 119) She suggests that the Theosophist Mrs Hinloopen Labberton set in motion a discourse which highlighted the mystical wisdom inhering in the *wayang*; this was then picked up by Dutch-educated Javanese, whose particular ways of speaking about the *wayang* came over time to be regarded as "the truth". Mangkunagara VII's 1933 text 'On the *Wayang* Kulit (Purwa) and Its Symbolic and Mystical Elements', in which he suggests that every Javanese shadow play was a reenactment of a spiritual search for mystical knowledge, became 'the definitive statement on the meaning of Central Javanese, especially Solonese, shadow theatre.' (Sears 1996, 169) It served the colonial government's purpose to preserve *wayang* as a vehicle for mystical knowledge, rather than to recognise its function as a *pasemon.* A *pasemon*, meaning allegory or allusion, is a potent form of narrative because it enables a story to be presented as a caricature of reality and it lets a story ask how the past can explain the present.[1] Because a *dalang* can convey pointed political statements through his creation of a *pasemon*, Dutch scholars and the colonial government needed to exert their control over both the *wayang* repertoires and the *dalang*s. Furthermore, in promoting *wayang* as the "essence" of Javanese religion, the colonial government sought to dilute the potential political power of Islam in the colony.

New Order Indonesia saw a move away from the refined court styles favoured by the colonial government, but the state maintains a subtle form of control of the *wayang*, mainly through commodification of performances. The government radio station, RRI, for example, stages performances every Saturday night in major cities in Java. Government-sponsored organisations (such as *Punakawan* in Solo) are designed to keep traditional customs alive and to manage their enactment. The

[1] For discussion of the notion of *pasemon* see Sears 1996, 7-8; Ras 1976, 65

government uses politically "safe" *dalang*s like Ki Manteb Soedarsono and Anom Suroto to both promote Javanese culture and attract political support.

The *wayang* is sometimes dismissed as anachronistic and inimical to the notion of a democratic world view, by Javanese and non-Javanese alike. As far back as 1945 Sjahrir, for example, wrote,

> The *wajang*, all the simple symbolism and mysticism - which is parallel to the allegory and medieval wisdom in Europe, what can they offer us intellectually and culturally? Almost nothing. (cited in Sears 1996, 214)[1]

Reference was made in the previous chapter to Pramoedya's distaste for the *wayang* as a vehicle for storytelling. Keeler (1987, 14) nonetheless maintains that 'even Javanese who don't much care for *wayang*... nevertheless speak of it as uniquely meaningful, or as they put it, “full”.'

New wine in old bottles

Sears (1996, 300) suggests that 'the *wayang* tales and the shadow theatre performances that convey them are always already empty, waiting to be filled again and again by the voices of new storytellers'. They are thus a blueprint of sorts, onto which new stories and messages can be superimposed. What we then have is 'new wine in old bottles'. Part of *wayang*'s enduring appeal is indeed its adaptability as a *pasemon.* As Utomo (1996) suggests,

> the *wayang* myths are not merely something added on to contemporary literary texts, rather they are the inspiration for the creation of those texts.[2]

This has given rise to the phenomenon of *novel wayang* (*wayang* novels) and contemporary adaptations of the *wayang* stories. Early examples included

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[1] Mangunwijaya nonetheless draws parallels between Sjahrir and the oldest Pandawa brother Yudhistira, who ‘was never liked by the uncouth, by the Machiavellians, by the fascists, by the dictators, by the money-hungry financiers, by the opportunists’ (Mangunwijaya 1994, 261) (‘tidak pernah disenangi oleh kaum kasar, penganut-penganut Machiavelli, golongan fasis, oknum-oknum diktatorial, cukong-cukong berjantung dompet atau bunglon-bunglon’)

[2] Mitos wayang ... bukan merupakan tempelan dalam teks sastra mutakhir Indonesia, tetapi merupakan roh penciptaan.

Yudhistira Ardi Noegraha's novels *Arjuna Mencari Cinta* and *Arjuna Drop Out*, followed in the 1980s by his *Arjuna Mencari Cinta II* and Sindhunata's *Anak Bajang Menggiring Angin*. Clark (1998) speaks of a 'boom' in *novel wayang* in the early 1990s. He also distinguishes between the *novel wayang*, which is 'a confident extension of the *wayang* world into the contemporary world of (post)modern Indonesian literature' and literary texts, such as *Burung-burung manyar* and Umar Kayam's *Para Priyayi* which do not radically transform the *wayang* but rather 'exhibit a certain degree of textual allusion' to the genre.

Mangunwijaya, who describes his novel *Burung-burung manyar* as 'a "cosmic" epic or "*wayang*" in modern form' (1986c, 106)[1], uses *wayang* as a *pasemon* within a style of writing which is essentially realist. In his search for names for the characters of *Burung-burung manyar*, he tried to find a way of rooting his story unequivocally in the Indonesian context. His search led him to the *wayang*, 'which truly reflects local Javanese colour'.[2] From there he began a journey of rediscovery of the stories and philosophy of the *wayang* (which, significantly, in the light of Sears' assertions, led him to the conclusion that much scholarly writing by Indonesian scholars on the *wayang* is in fact merely a pseudo-scientific rewording of the work of Western scholars). (1986c, 111) He finally settled on the story of Narayana-Kakrasana as his *pasemon*. In Mangunwijaya's work neo-regionalism intersects with an essentially realist discourse; even the sometimes wildly digressive narrative of *Durga Umayi* is underpinned by a plot and a message.

The nation as protagonist

Mangunwijaya has stated unambiguously that his novels - including the three under discussion in this chapter, *Burung-burung manyar* (*The Weaverbirds*, 1981), *Burung-burung rantau* (*The migratory Birds*, 1993) and *Durga Umayi* (1991) - share but one protagonist, namely 'the Indonesian nation'. He goes on to say that in his works,

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[1] epik "kosmik' "atau juga "wayang" dalam bentuk novel moderen.

[2] yang benar-benar berwarna lokal (*in hoc casu*) Jawa

> This protagonist has been made into a *wayang* novel in Indonesian, populated by characters depicted in naturalistic, realistic style, who are nonetheless also symbolic to differing degrees.[1] (Mangunwijaya 1997b, 56)

As will be demonstrated in the discussion of the novels, that protagonist, the Indonesian nation, reflects a philosophy and world view inspired by that of Sutan Sjahrir, founder of the *Partai Sosialis Indonesia* (Indonesian Socialist Party) and Prime Minister of the Republic of Indonesia during the first two years of the revolution.

As well as being a celebration of the nation, *Burung-burung manyar* and *Burung-burung rantau* may be read as fictionalised articulations of Mangunwijaya's well-documented abhorrence of "narrow nationalism". In a 1987 essay, for example, he wrote,

> The nationalism which was pioneered by the founders of the Republic of Indonesia was not the nationalism of Hitler or of Japan, whose hallmark was the sacrifice of the people for the sake of the false glory of the nation. Our nationalism was constituted in the principles of faith in God and of humanitarianism. In other words, it had universal dimensions. It was not an aping of the narrow nationalism of "*right or wrong my country* ", the nationalism of nineteenth century Britain. Rather, it was an acknowledgment that "*right or wrong is right or wrong*."[2] (Mangunwijaya 1987a)

These novels tap into the debates of the *Polemik Kebudayaan* which have informed much thinking about the identity and direction of the Indonesian nation since the 1930s. In contrast to the radical nationalist position of Pramoedya's narrative of nation, Mangunwijaya's novels are embedded in an ideology of universalism which is derived from the *Polemik Kebudayaan*, filtered through

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[1] Yang diwayangkan dalam bentuk cerita novel/roman dalam bahasa Indonesia dengan tokoh-tokoh pelaku yang terlukis naturalis realis namun sekaligus simbolis dalam berbagai skala abstraksi

[2] Nasionalisme yang dirintis para pendiri Republik Indonesia bukan nasionalisme Hitler atau Dai Nippon dulu, yang perangainya mengorbankan rakyat demi keagungan palsu negara. Nasionalisme kita diemban konstitutif oleh sila Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa dan sila Peri Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab. Jadi, berdimensi universal. Bukan nasionalisme sempit "*right or wrong my country*", jiplakan dari Britania Raya abad ke-19. Tetapi, "*right or wrong is right or wrong".*'
These sentiments are repeated elsewhere. See for example Mangunwijaya 1995b, 75-79

Sjahrir's notion of individualism and suspicion of cultural nationalism, and given a literary voice in the Indonesian language by the writers of the *Angkatan 45* who wrote in celebration of the Indonesian nation but who also aspired to an 'international plane of understanding'.

Burung-burung manyar and *Burung-burung rantau* pick up on Alisjahbana's notion of the 'novel of ideas'. (Alisjahbana 1983, 16-18) In a 1992 letter to H.B. Jassin, Mangunwijaya wrote that his idea for writing 'an essay in novel form' (*esei dalam bentuk roman*) was influenced by the views of the German critic Assunto, which corresponded with Alisjahbana's call for a novel of ideas (*roman ide-ide*). (Mangunwijaya 1992b)[1] Alisjahbana's own view of the role of literature is summed up in his description of his epic 1936 novel *Layar terkembang*:

> I have described individuals who have freed themselves from the bonds of the old society and culture, deciding to bind themselves once again, by accepting the task of stirring up and raising the level of that society in its relations with the modern world. (Alisjahbana 1966, 43)

Mangunwijaya's novels are pseudo-literary imaginings of the idea of universalism. Like Alisjahbana, he endows literature with a lofty function in his statement that the role of literature is to 'impart wisdom, to stir the soul, to make man more humane'.[2] (Mangunwijaya 1995c)

Burung-burung manyar

As was the case with reading Pramoedya's tetralogy, when reading *Burung-burung manyar* I was drawn into a narrative which, although its protagonists are fictional, nonetheless points outwards, to an external world - Indonesia in the period 1934 to 1978 - and to real historical events and personalities. The intersection of realism and neo-regionalism in the novel required me as a reader to establish connections - some obvious, some less so - between the narrative and the

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[1] Assunto's book is titled *Theorie der Literatur bei Schriftstellen des 20 Jahrhunderts* (Rowohlt Verlag: 1975)

[2] membentuk insan yang budiwan, yang mengasah nurani, yang membuat manusia menjadi lebih manusiawi

structure, characters and stories of the *wayang*. This means that sometimes a reading of the novel as straightforwardly realist is frustrated - *wayang* stories represent a blend of mythology and history. In addition, the "grand vision" of the novel is more important than the explication of a linear plot which, as Becker points out (1979, 225), is also largely irrelevant in the *wayang*:

> (A) *wayang* plot is very similar to a piece of traditional Javanese music, in which a musical pattern is expanded from within, producing layer upon layer of pattern moving at different times.

The frequent switching of perspective between the protagonists, the real events of the period, the *wayang* and the authorial voice make for a different mode of realism than that encountered in Pramoedya's tetralogy.

The symbolism, intended or otherwise, of the date of publication of *Burung-burung manyar* - shortly before 17 August 1981 - was not lost on Indonesian critics, who largely viewed the novel as a valuable contribution to the body of discourse about Indonesian nationalism and the ongoing search for an Indonesian identity.[1] Most reviews of *Burung-burung manyar* regard its concern with looking at the Revolution from 'the other side' (*sisi lain*, Soenardi 1981) as a useful reinterpretation of the history of the period, though the proposal that the novel be submitted as Indonesia's entry in the SEA Write Awards was vetoed for this very reason. While ostensibly a love story, with a somewhat melodramatic ending, most critics regard this reading, and its weaverbird symbolism, as being of secondary importance to its political and historical concerns.[2]

A nation divided, Teto and Atik

The story has two protagonists, the male Setadewa (known as Teto) and the female Larasati (known as Atik). Each has a different vision of the shape of the Indonesian nation, yet each is sympathetic to the ideals of nationalism. These

[1] See for example Parakitri 1981

[2] Exceptions to this include Yatim 1981a

disparate visions are contextualised within Javanese mythology - both Atik and Teto personify elements of significant and well-known *wayang* characters.

Mangunwijaya allows both protagonists a voice in the novel, although Atik's is presented through the third person, leading one critic to suggest that Teto's views are allowed to dominate:

> (Atik)'s opinion of Teto and of events is insufficiently developed ... and lacks nuances. She is *seen* from the outside or through Teto's eyes.' (Hellwig 1994, 127)

Moreover, given the many points of similarity between Teto's views and those espoused by Mangunwijaya in his non-fictional writings, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Teto's narratorial voice is in fact also the voice of the author.

However, in allowing both voices to be heard, Mangunwijaya unpacks the idea that "nationalism" is somehow singular and homogeneous, and suggests the possibility that it can be multi-faceted, and somewhat less cohesive than allowed for in linear histories. In the unpacking process, he poses historical questions reminiscent of the *Polemik Kebudayaan* debates, such as: What are the characteristics of a true patriot? How can a nation become truly independent? How do we deal with the past? What is to be done about the dichotomy between East and West?

Teto's quest to discover the truth about himself also involves a search for the answers to these questions. It is a search played out, as Mangunwijaya himself has suggested (1986c, 103-4), through a *perang kembang* which in the *wayang* is the trial by fire between a knight and a number of ogres. Teto's development into a mature adult mixing freely in more than one culture and milieu, proud of his hybrid *Indo* status, a "multinational" to use his own words, can be read as a metaphor for Mangunwijaya's vision of the development of the Indonesian nation.

Atik

Atik is named after Larasati (also known as Subhadra and Sumbadra), the sister of Kresna (king of Dwarawati and adviser to the Pandawa clan). The Pandawa prince Arjuna takes Larasati by force from Kresna's kingdom. Regarded as being of noble character, she is considered by many to be the epitome of the ideal, refined Javanese wife.[1] (van Ness and Prawirohardjo 1980, 92) Mangunwijaya says of her (1986c, 105),

> (I)n the world of Javanese *wayang* Larasati is depicted as a practical, intelligent woman, clever rather than shrill and flirtatious. She is [Arjuna's wife] Srikandi's archery teacher, and doesn't waste her time on jealousy and conventional trivialities.[2]

However, Atik's personality in *Burung-burung manyar* is more like that of Arjuna's other wife, Srikandi. Atik is not the dignified lady-like type personified by Larasati but rather, like Srikandi, is 'active, energetic, disputatious, generous, go-getting.' (Anderson 1965, 22) It is a feature of Mangunwijaya's leading female characters that they embody in one personality all the traits conventionally admired in a woman: active, yet ladylike; intelligent yet caring; flirtatious yet dignified; go-getting yet compassionate. While *wayang* audiences frequently remark on the differences between Sumbadra and Srikandi, Mangunwijaya prefers to blend the two into one "perfect" woman.

Teto

Parallels are drawn in *Burung-burung manyar* between Teto and Kresna's brother Kakrasana (also known as Baladewa), whose decision to side with the Korawa clan against the Pandawas makes him the enemy of his own brother, who is an adviser to the Pandawa clan. In the prelude of the novel Kakrasana is described as *seta*, meaning pure white, of blood, skin and bones. As Wardhana (1984) comments,

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[1] 'Larasati' is a derivation of the Javanese phrase *larasing ati*, meaning 'at peace in her heart'. See Baryadi 1984

[2] dalam dunia wayang Jawa (Larasati) digambarkan selaku wanita yang praktis, cerdas, istri Arjuna yang tak banyak cingcong dan kekenesan, tetapi mrantasi, guru memanah Srikandi yang tidak banyak menghabiskan waktu untuk cemburu dan tetek bengek "tradisional"

> In the world of *wayang* Kakrasana was sometimes called "(uncle) whitey"; similarly Teto in *Burung-burung manyar* is an *Indo*.[1]

Kakrasana, whose father was Basuki (echoed in Teto's father's name, Brajabasuki), the dragon god of the underworld, is the symbol of spiritual resoluteness.

Verbruggen and Sjahrir

Apart from Atik, two characters play a significant role in shaping Teto's metaphorical journey from 'nothingness to beingness'. They are the fictional character Major General Verbruggen and the historical character Sutan Sjahrir, both of whom represent links between the two cultures - Dutch and "Indonesian" - which will give birth to the new independent nation.

Major General Verbruggen is the Commander of the Colonial Army battalion which Teto joins. As Sastrowardoyo suggests (1981), Verbruggen - a Dutchman living in the East Indies - represents a bridge (*brug*) between the two cultures which Teto straddles. He is described as a 'Dutch Petruk' (*petruk Belanda*), a reference to the son of the *punakawan* (clown) Semar from the *wayang*: despite their comic appearance and predisposition for horseplay, the *punakawan* characters play a significant role in the *wayang*. Petruk, like his brothers and his father, provides essential guidance to the Pandawa knights. His scrawniness, huge mouth and long nose belie the fact that he is a fine fighter - although, like Verbruggen, he is unscrupulous as well.

Teto's relationship to Verbruggen is analogous to that of Kakrasana's with his father-in-law Salya, the king of Mandraka, who 'officially sides with the Korawas for the sake of the unity of the state but who in his heart has great sympathy for the Pandawa clan.'[2] (Mangunwijaya 1986c, 106) As the prelude of *Burung-burung manyar* tells us,

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[1] Dalam dunia wayang, Kakrasana sesekali dipanggil dengan sebutan “(paman) bule”, sementara itu Teto dalam *Burung-burung manyar* adalah tokoh berdarah Indo.

[2] memihak resmi pada Korawa demi persatuan negara, namun hatinya bersimpati kepada para Pandawa.

> deep in their hearts, both Baladewa and Salya harboured an inextinguishable flame of love for the Pandawa clan.[1] (BBM, v)

Verbruggen, who was in love with Teto's mother before her marriage, is almost like a father to Teto. It has even been suggested that Teto could be the illegitimate child of Verbruggen and Marice. (Hellwig 1994, 130)

Dutch-educated and Western-orientated, Sutan Sjahrir has also been described as a metaphorical bridge - between an Indonesian culture in Dutch and an Indonesian culture in Indonesian. (Foulcher 1993c, 228) Despite his own antipathy to the Republican movement, Teto is forced to acknowledge that Sjahrir, in his commitment to a social as well as a national revolution, appears to embody answers to many of his questions about independence, freedom, nationalism and the dichotomy between East and West.

'From nothingness to beingness': the evolution of a nation

Burung-burung manyar spans the years 1934 to 1978, during which time Indonesia was transformed from a Dutch colony to an independent nation with a fast-growing economy and an internationalist outlook. This evolution, from 'nothingness' to 'beingness', is enacted largely through the character of Teto: Atik acts as a catalyst to his development, rather than herself symbolising the nation. In his depiction of the evolution of the nation Mangunwijaya manages to convey a sense of both the inexorable nature of progress and the cyclical nature of the *wayang*, which permeates the narrative.

Teto's father is a Colonial Army (KNIL) lieutenant.[2] His *Indo* mother has family connections to the Mangkunegaran, the lesser royal house in Solo, Central

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[1] dalam lubuk hati raja Salya maupun Baladewa, kecintaan kepada para Pandawa tidaklah pernah berhenti berpijar

[2] KNIL = *Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger*: Dutch colonial army. Though most of the officers in the KNIL were Dutch or Eurasians, the majority of its troops were recruited from the Christian Indonesian areas of the eastern part of the archipelago, particularly Amboina, the Minahasa area of north Celebes, and Timor. Soldiers from these areas were given a substantially higher rate of pay than the relatively small number of Javanese, Sundanese, and other Indonesian soldiers in the KNIL. (See Kahin 1952, 453)

Java. Teto's initial ambivalence about his *Indo* status is transformed in the course of the novel into an awareness of the potential richness of heterogeneity and hybridity.

Both Atik's parents are *pribumi* Indonesians. Her father, Antana, works at the Botanical Gardens in Bogor and in Ujung Kulon National Park and her mother, who also has connections with the royal house of Mangkunegaran, is the daughter of a village woman. (In *wayang* mythology Larasati's father was the similarly-named Antapoga who, like Antana, worked with nature, as a cowherd. Larasati's mother in the *wayang* was a palace milkmaid.)

Teto and Atik's lives are removed from the direct sphere of *priyayi* influence - Atik lives in Bogor with her family and Teto at the military barracks in Magelang (as did Mangunwijaya). However, like Minke in *Bumi manusia*, both Atik and Teto reject what they regard as the feudalism of the *priyayi* way of life. This forges a bond between the two when they meet on family trips to Solo, and influences Teto's thinking about the real meaning of freedom and independence.

During the Japanese occupation Teto's father is arrested by the Japanese Military Police because of his involvement in underground activities, and his mother is given an ultimatum: become the mistress of the Commander, or her husband will die. After the trauma of losing his parents, Teto is taken into the Antana household which, during the upheaval of the Japanese occupation, becomes a refuge for him. Similarly, Antapoga in the *wayang* takes on the responsibility of sheltering the young Kakrasana, Kresna and Sumbadra during the "Age of Upheaval". During this time Teto and Atik become aware of their love for each other, but a seemingly unbridgeable ideological gap is destined to tear them apart.

During the Revolution Teto joins KNIL; Atik however is a committed Republican and works for Sjahrir in Yogyakarta. (The character of Atik may in fact be based on that of Poppy Sjahrir, Sjahrir's wife, who worked as his secretary.[1]) Teto takes part in the Second Military Action and the occupation of Yogyakarta. One of

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[1] See Mangunwijaya 1992a and also Sundari 1989, 9. For details of Sjahrir's life and work, and an examination of Sjahrir's ambiguous position between cultures, see Mrazek 1994

the novel's most poignant moments occurs when, during that same action Atik's father is killed in an attack by Dutch fighter planes in the surroundings of Yogyakarta.

Eighteen years later Teto and Atik meet again, by which time Atik is married to Janakatamsi (Jana), with whom she has three children. (In *wayang* mythology Larasati marries Arjuna who is also known as Janaka.) Appropriately reflecting the era of science and technology which has now dawned in Indonesia, Jana is a geologist, Atik is a biologist and head of the Directorate of Environment Conservation and Teto is a computer expert and managing director of a large American oil company. Teto visits Yogyakarta when Atik is about to defend her doctorate on the weaverbird. She and Jana invite him to her home and accept him as her "older brother". Atik and Teto are still in love with each other but before they have a chance to make any real sense of their relationship, Atik and Jana are killed in a plane crash. Teto becomes the legal guardian of their three children (whose names - Teto, Padmi and Kris - are the childhood names of Kakrasana, Sumbadra and Kresna). There are parallels with the ending of the *Bharatayudha* war in the *wayang*, when, after the death of all the other heroes, Kakrasana is left to bring up Parikesit, Arjuna's grandson, who is destined to become the ancestor of the kings of Java.

The concluding pages of the novel correspond to the *adegan sintren* in the *wayang*, in which the hero has made his choices about the direction of his life. Despite the fact that he now admits that he was defeated by Jana in the marriage stakes, Teto concedes that with the adoption of Atik and Jana's children 'fresh life was breathed into the midday hours of my life'[1] (BBM, 261) and, as suggested in the title of the chapter ('The Weaverbird's New Nest'), he is now starting to rebuild his life.

Questioning "nasionalisme Kumbakarna" and the meaning of patriotism

[1] kesejukan bagi siang dan petang kurun hidupku (I have used Hunter's English translation)

Mangunwijaya has said that he was motivated to write *Burung-burung manyar* 'in part by annoyance at the unhealthy falsification and mythologising of historical events',[1] adding that he wanted to encourage his fellow countrymen to 're-think the fundamental questions of life.'[2] (1986c, 109-110) With regard to the Revolution in particular, he asks (1986c, 109):

> Is it true that "our side" was always right and "their side" was always the evil enemy?[3]

Teto shares with his alter-ego Kakrasana a determination to fight on the side of the cause he believes to be most right, despite his ties to the other side. Teto also has much in common with Adipati Karna who, abandoned as a baby and adopted by a charioteer, is a stepbrother to the Pandawas. As an adult Karna's military skills and moral sensitivity attract the attention of Duryudana, the king of the Korawas, so he comes to fight on the side of the Korawas against his own stepbrothers. Loyal to Duryudana to the end, Karna resists the arguments of Kresna and his mother that he should join the Pandawas in the *Bharatayudha* war, and he is killed by his stepbrother Arjuna. In accordance with the *wayang* ethos, Karna is honoured by his enemies as well as his friends because he lives and dies as a real knight should. Anderson (1965, 8) relates an anecdote which suggests compelling similarities between Karna and Mangunwijaya's depiction of Teto:

> The Javanese attitude to Karna was brought home to me once very vividly when I was speaking with an elderly Javanese official about a friend of his who had fought on the side of the Dutch during the Revolution. The friend had been embittered when some of his family were murdered by a gang of nationalist youths in the anarchic days after the Proclamation of Independence. The elderly Javanese was an ardent patriot, yet as he spoke of his former school-friend he slipped easily and almost unconsciously into a comparison with Adipati Karna. His friend, too, had fought on the wrong side, but for reasons which seemed to him sufficient. And he had fought with courage and honour. One could not call him a traitor like those who had "crossed over" from faint-heartedness, lack of principle, or hope of gain.

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[1] pemalsuan-pemalsuan dan pemitosan peristiwa-peristiwa sejarah yang tidak sehat

[2] merenungkan kembali pertanyaan dasar kehidupan.

[3] apakah benar pihak "kita" selalu baik dan "mereka" selalu musuh yang jahat?

Mangunwijaya (1994, 261) also acknowledges that 'Adipati Karna died a hero, sacrificing familial ties for the sake of a more noble goal than mere personal interest.'[1] Teto's reasons for joining the "other side", however, do not derive from loyalty, nor are they based on faint-heartedness, lack of principle or hope of gain. His reasons are much more pragmatic. If Karna is 'a potentially tragic character' because he feels duty-bound to fight for a cause he knows to be unjust (Keeler 1987, 216-7), Teto similarly can be viewed as potentially tragic because he rejects the unswerving type of loyalty favoured by Karna.

Another compelling parallel that can be drawn between the character of Teto and a *wayang* figure is with Wibisana from the *Ramayana*. Mangunwijaya (1984a) claims that 'the most significant theme in the *Ramayana* is not the story of Rama and Sinta, but that of Wibisana and Kumbakarna.'[2] Wibisana was the youngest brother of Rahwana, the evil king of Alengka who abducted Sinta. Appalled by his brother's actions, and regarding serving the truth as more important than serving his country, Wibisana joined Rama's forces against his own brother. Such a switching of loyalties can be seen as outrageous treachery, but Wibisana is nonetheless to be admired for his unswerving commitment to what he sees as the truth. Compare Wibisana's actions to those of his other brother Kumbakarna, who was also outraged by Rahwana's actions and beseeched him to return Sinta to Rama. However, upon hearing that his own two sons had died in the battle, Kumbakarna 'left the scene and headed for the battleground, not to defend his brother, but to defend his country, his people, his ancestors, and his family. His motto was, "Better to die in battle than live in Alengka in luxury as the vassal of a foreign king, guarded by an army of apes. Right or wrong, my country".' (Mulyono 1977, 81-2) It is the

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[1] Adipati Karna gugur sebagai pahlawan mengorbankan perasaan pertalian darah, demi satu kepentingan yang lebih luhur dari kepentingan pribadi.
See also Sears 1996, 220n, where she refers to Muhsin's contention that Soekarno, 'like his famous namesake Adipati Karno, made the ultimate sacrifice and was forced to become a traitor to save his honor and the honor of his family name.'

[2] Tema paling penting dalam dari Ramayana bukan lakon Rama dan Sinta, tetapi Wibisana dan Kumbakarna

rejection of this notion of 'right or wrong my country' (commonly referred to in Indonesia as *nasionalisme Kumbakarna* {'Kumbakarna nationalism'}) which underpins the narrative of *Burung-burung manyar*. As reactions to the novel indicate, even in the late twentieth century such a rejection is tantamount to sacrilege. As indicated in the title of his 1981 review ('An attempt to blur the values of the August 1945 revolution'[1]), the critic Soenardi, for example, clearly regards the values of the revolution as being inviolable. He abhors the fact that

> it appears that (in this novel) an attempt is being made to force other values to replace the historical values which have for so long been entrenched in the hearts and minds of the Indonesian people.[2]

In the last analysis, however, Soenardi decides that Teto has been given the role of mouthpiece for such controversial views on account of his mixed blood (*blasteran*), and that therefore he is to be pitied and forgiven. Such a confused and divided soul as Teto must not be allowed to undermine the values of the Indonesian struggle for independence. For Soenardi, apparently, the hybridity of the *Indo* status is not a cause for celebration, as it is for Mangunwijaya and ultimately for Teto.[3]

Mangunwijaya's disavowal of the notion of *right or wrong my country* also implies a rejection of patriotism, if patriotism is what is suggested by Bernard Shaw, 'the conviction that one's own country is better than other countries, simply because one happened to be born there'. (Mangunwijaya 1995b, 30) Through Teto's struggle to come to terms with what nationalism really means, and where his loyalties should lie, Mangunwijaya explores the notion that patriotism does not lie in

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[1] Usaha Mengaburkan Nilai-nilai Revolusi Agustus 1945

[2] Rupanya nilai lain hendak dipaksakan mengganti nilai sejarah yang telah terpateri dalam sanubari bangsa Indonesia.

[3] See Mangunwijaya 1991c, for example, where he writes that the Indo (or *Indisch*), despite their marginalisation, 'feel that they are richer, more complete, than the pure-bloods, because they can absorb elements from both the West and the East..' (merasa diri lebih kaya, lebih lengkap daripada yang totok dan yang asli, karena mampu menghayati Barat dan Timur sekaligus...) This positive view of the status of being Indo is at odds with most views of such hybridity in Indonesia, where many have gone out of their way to deny their "Native" blood. Mangunwijaya was inspired to write this article after a meeting in Amsterdam with two Indo women writers - Jill Stolk and Marion Bloem - whose mixed blood was a source of pride.

an unswerving allegiance to one's fatherland and its leaders, but means serving the best interests of the people, the *rakyat*.

During the Japanese occupation, Teto rejects any notion that the people's interests are served through the strategy of cooperation, as adopted by Soekarno and Hatta.[1] He can never forgive Soekarno and Hatta for this seeming compliance with the enemy, a tactic which he perceives as a betrayal of the Indonesian people in general and of his own parents in particular. After his mother has been taken away he declares (BBM, 34),

> From that moment, the profound hatred that ran through my veins for anything and everything that smacked of Japan became even stronger. This included those traitors Soekarno and Hatta and everyone else who called themselves "Indonesians", those who never tired of kowtowing to the Japanese and who, at Soekarno's prompting, took to the streets to chant their slogans: "Spit on the Brits" "Spank the frigging Yanks" "Long live The Rising Sun!"[2]

Diametrically opposed to Teto's views are those of Atik. However, her fervent support of Soekarno is not necessarily jingoistic. Her motivation is honourable: she genuinely believes that Soekarno is doing the right thing for her country. As Mangunwijaya comments (1995b, 31), 'the patriot's attitude must ... be judged from the point of view of his motivation.'[3]

Between the stance of Teto and Atik lies that of Atik's father, who says of Soekarno (BBM, 36),

> Soekarno is fire. We need fire. You can't have power if there's no conviction. But that's only half the story. The conviction has to be channelled rationally, to produce an efficient machine that doesn't end

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[1] During the occupation, the Japanese sponsored mass organisations, capitalising on Islam and anti-Western sentiment. Soekarno was allowed to address gatherings of Indonesians, which he used as an opportunity to insinuate nationalist propaganda into respectful addresses. In 1943 he and Hatta were flown to Tokyo to thank the Emperor for the creation of a consultative body which made concessions to the nationalists.

[2] Dan semakin bencilah seluruh jiwaku kepada segala yang berbau Jepang. Termasuk itu pengkhianat-pengkhianat Soekarno-Hatta. Dan seluruh bangsa yang disebut Indonesia, yang membongkok-bongkok pada Jepang dan berteriak-teriak di alun-alun oleh hasutan Soekarno: 'Inggris kita linggis! Amerika kita seterika! Dai Nippon, *banzai*!'
The translation of the slogans is Hunter's

[3] sikap patriot ternyata perlu diuji ... dari segi motivasinya

> up burning itself out, along with everything it comes into contact with.[1]

As Mr Antana suggests, many people found the inspiration they sought in Soekarno's eloquence and leadership. Although many people did distrust him, for various reasons, he succeeded in acquiring the kudos that later made him "Father of the Revolution". Atik's father acts as a foil to her passionate devotion to the nationalist movement. While he is not anti-nationalist, he has reservations about the tactics of the leaders, warning Atik to 'listen to the way our nationalist friends present their orders and their speeches - they're just like the Japanese.'[2] (BBM, 38)

In the process of exploring the notion of patriotism, Teto inevitably contemplates the nature of treachery. The novel exposes the motives behind actions which are perceived as treacherous, and it becomes clear that treachery, like patriotism, is not fundamentally an issue of right and wrong, but rather of motivation or intent.

Teto is subjected to accusations of treachery on account of his siding with KNIL against the Republican army. He acknowledges that he is 'a KNIL soldier, branded as a traitor who has sold out on his own country'.[3] (BBM, 138) When the Dutch are defeated, the accusations become even more virulent, and Teto is taunted with cries of 'NICA peasant! You're gonna die!'[4] (BBM, 128) However, behind the perceived treachery, at the time Teto had his own compelling reasons for joining KNIL, and despite the fact that he later changes his mind (BBM, 47), his decision was the right one for him at the time. He joined the KNIL because he was convinced that Indonesians weren't ready for independence and that his own father and mother 'were a lot more independent in spirit than the Soekarnoists, who hypnotised the masses to the point of hysteria and led them to a futile death, because

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[1] Soekarno itu api. Kita butuh api. Tanpa semangat tidak ada daya. Tetapi itu baru separoh. Harus disalurkan secara rasional, agar menjadi mesin yang baik jalannya, dan tidak membakar segala hal, termasuk diri sendiri.

[2] 'Dengar cara sahabat-sahabat kita berkomando dan berpidato serta bersikap persis Jepang.'

[3] ...serdadu KNIL, yang dicap pengkhianat dan penjual bangsa...

[4] NICA INLANDER! Mampus kau nanti!'

they were armed only with sharpened bamboo spears in their confrontation with Allied bombers and howitzers that had defeated no less than the Japanese imperial army.'[1] (BBM, 47)

Towards the end of the novel when Teto sardonically describes himself and the KNIL soldiers as 'we traitors' (*pihak pengkhianat bangsa*), Jana quickly replies (BBM, 239-240),

> We've never thought of you that way at all. We knew the reasons behind the choices you made. And you were honest.[2]

For Teto, notions of patriotism and loyalty are secondary to a concern for the sort of responsible individualism advocated by Sjahrir.

Reading the story as history: the spirit of Sjahrir

Mangunwijaya's praise for Sjahrir's universal spirit, maturity and clarity of thinking is summed up in his comment (1996) that 'if we as Indonesians wish to make progress or at the very least if we wish to avoid drowning, then we must learn from the maturity and wisdom bequeathed to us by, among others, Soetan Sjahrir.'[3]

In *Burung-burung manyar*, the authorial voice is never more present than when Sjahrir enters the narrative. At these moments Teto becomes a mouthpiece for Mangunwijaya's admiration of the man, and his response to the "spell" of Sjahrir functions as a yardstick measuring his conversion to a Sjahrir-inspired type of socialism, to which Mangunwijaya pays tribute (1996):

> I would like to see socialism, as it was advocated by our fellow countryman Soetan Sjahrir (rather than by non-Indonesians), become a state of mind, an inspirational force and also the driving principle

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[1] jauh lebih merdeka jiwanya dari itu kaum Soekarno yang menghipnotisir massa rakyat menjadi histeris dan mati konyol hanya karena mengandalkan bambu runcing belaka melawan mustang-mustang dan meriam-meriam Howitser yang pernah mengalahkan tentara Kaiser Jepang.

[2] kami tidak pernah menganggap kau begitu. Kami tahu segala sebab mengapa kau begitu. Mas Seta jujur.

[3] Bila Indonesia ingin maju atau paling sedikit bila Indonesia tidak mau tenggelam, maka pendewasaan dan hikmah yang diwariskan oleh antara lain Soetan Sjahrir perlu kita pelajari.

> for a creative intelligence. And more than that, it should be used honestly and in a spirit of fair play.[1]

A defining moment for Teto occurs when he first encounters Sjahrir. This happens in a part of the novel corresponding to the *perang Ampyak* scene in the *wayang*, in which the young hero begins to encounter many obstacles and challenges. Teto finds himself grappling with powerlessness and confused loyalties when he confronts the charismatic figure of Sjahrir, an encounter which renders him 'paralysed' (*lumpuh*) and 'impotent' (*impoten*). (BBM, 60) He describes his connection with Sjahrir as 'spiritual' (*batin*) (BBM, 114), and he grudgingly admires the man for the challenge he presents to his own views about the Republican movement. It seems to Teto that Sjahrir, unlike Soekarno and Hatta, embodies the qualities of a true patriot: his primary concern is the welfare of the *rakyat* (the people), he rejects Indonesia's feudal heritage, which is threatening to undermine the nationalist movement, and he seems capable of envisaging the sort of modernising project necessary to make Indonesia truly independent. Sjahrir was among those who refused to work with the Japanese; he associated the Japanese military machine with feudalism and fascism. In *Our struggle* he denounced those who cooperated with the Japanese as 'running dogs of the Japanese' and claimed that 'the people in control of the Republican government are men without real character. Most of them are far too accustomed to kowtow to and run errands for the Dutch and Japanese.' (Sjahrir 1968, 8) His vision of modernisation included 'practical rationality, respect for individualism, contempt for “outworn traditions”, distrust of nationalist utopianism, and concern for order and efficiency.' (Sjahrir 1968, 16)[2]

After meeting Sjahrir, many of Teto's views undergo a significant shift. After a series of challenges paralleling those of the hero in the *perang gagal* in the *wayang*, Teto reflects, '1946 was a year of confusion for me, and I no longer

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[1] sosialisme, seperti yang disarankan warga sesama bangsa kita Soetan Sjahrir dan bukan orang asing, semoga menjadi state of mind, jiwa inspiratip, tetapi juga dorongan inteligensi yang cerdas analitis maupun sintetis. Namun lebih dari itu, dalam kejujuran dan semangat fair play.
See also Mangunwijaya 1986c

[2] See also Mrazek 1994, 274-283.

knew what to think.'[1] (BBM, 79) The *perang gagal* depicts an inconclusive battle, symbolising a stage in man's life which is marked by doubt, because he has not yet established a clear direction for himself.[2] In 1946 Teto begins to rethink his opinions of both the Republican army, whom he previously regarded as an undisciplined rabble, and the KNIL mercenary army. Watching some of the Republican pilots landing at Kemayoran airport, he concedes that they 'were real men. These men were forging a new future for their people, while I was rotting away here, amongst people who were not my own, who had come here as spectators, or perhaps even as plunderers.'[3] (BBM, 81) He is even forced to acknowledge in the Republicans 'a certain quiet refinement that seemed to mock the members of the Colonial Army: we were after all little more than a bunch of hick mercenary bastards.'[4] (BBM, 83) Even when the KNIL has achieved its goal and taken Yogyakarta, it seems a hollow victory for Teto (BBM, 97):

> The moment I had been waiting for arrived. We took control of Yogyakarta. But what an anticlimax it proved to be.[5]

Later he muses (BBM, 114):

> I was frequently beset by doubts about the meaning of everything I had done and believed in since losing my mother and father. However, usually I covered over all those doubts by throwing on my rucksack and armoury - that was enough to quell all notions of uncertainty in a trigger-happy soul like myself. But that morning

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[1] Tahun 1946 bagiku serba simpang-siur dan aku sendiri sudah tidak tahu lagi harus berpikir apa.

[2] 1946 was also a year of uncertainty and inconclusiveness in Indonesia. With the departure of the British troops, the Dutch civil administration returned to re-establish itself in the former colony. The first stage in negotiations between the Republican movement and the Dutch resulted in the Linggarjati Agreement, drawn up in November 1946. It failed, however, to result in any real compromise between the two factions, because it did not address many of the fundamental issues of concern, and there was widespread disagreement about its interpretation.

[3] ...lelaki-lelaki tulen. Ini orang-orang yang merintis suatu haridepan. Sedangkan aku sedang sekarat di sini, di antara orang-orang yang sebetulnya bangsaku, tetapi yang datang sebagai penonton atau bahkan tukang rampok.

[4] suatu jiwa yang diam halus tetapi tajam mengejek kami kaum KNIL, bangsat-bangsat bayaran yang sungguh-sungguh kampungan.

[5] Saat yang kunanti-nanti telah terjadi: Yogya kami kuasai. Tetapi alangkah kecewanya.
In December 1948 the Republican capital of Yogyakarta fell and Soekarno, Hatta and the other top leaders were captured and exiled. The Dutch expected the Republic to collapse but it resisted vigorously with an effective scorched-earth policy. As world opinion swung strongly against the Netherlands and it became clear that the war against the Republic could not be won without a sustained campaign, Dutch policy changed.

> when I laid eyes on Soekarno, Hatta, Sjahrir, Agus Salim and the other shining lights of the revolution ... I fell once again into a state of abject confusion. They'd been imprisoned by Colonel van Langen; they should have looked exhausted and frightened... But no, they smiled confidently and Soekarno stood tall.[1]

Despite the fact that he is reunited with his mother, Teto remains restless and uncertain about his future (BBM, 121):

> What would happen when this war - sorry, this police action - was over? Where would I go?[2]

Like Sjahrir, Teto believes that Indonesia will never be truly independent until it embarks upon a modernising project in which the "feudal mentality" of the colonised nation is dispensed with.[3] In addition to wanting no part of an independence achieved through collaboration with the Japanese, Teto reviles his own Javanese *priyayi* ancestry which, he feels, has cemented a coolie mentality in the Indonesian people. It is a concern also expressed by Sjahrir (1968, 28):

> The danger is that not realising that feudalism too is one of our enemies, we shall ally with the still living spirit of this feudalism, which is quite compatible with a certain kind of nationalism, and so create a nationalism built on a hierarchical, feudalistic solidarism, in fact on Fascism, the greatest enemy of world progress and of our people.

Teto cannot conceive of true freedom in a country whose social structure is still predicated upon "feudalism", which he regards as being endemic in the social structure and value systems of the Indies.[4] For this reason he rejects

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[1] Tidak hanya kadang-kadang aku dijangkiti rasa bimbang tentang arti segala sikap dan tingkahlaku selama ini, sejak Mama dan Papa lenyap dari kehidupanku. Akan tetapi biasanya itu kutimbuni dengan segala ransel dan peralatan perang yang mudah saja membungkam segala gagasan bingung dari manusia yang suka bising menghambur-hamburkan peluru. Tetapi ketika pada pagi kala itu aku melihat dengan mata kepalaku sendiri Si Soekarno dan Hatta dan Syahrir, Agus Salim dan para gembong Republik lain ... aku jatuh lagi terkulai dalam kebimbangan.
Mereka ditawan oleh Kolonel van Langen dan seharusnya mereka tampak lesu dan takut... Tetapi mereka tersenyum serba pasti dan Soekarno tegak bersikap jaya.

[2] Bagaimana sesudah perang atau, maaf, aksi polisional ini selesai? Ke mana aku?

[3] Ironically, this was also one of the concerns of the Japanese, who expressed the hope that the colonial mentality in Indonesia would be replaced with a more proactive and vigorous vision. See Frederick 1988, 76

[4] My use of the term "feudalism" here and elsewhere in this thesis follows the meaning it has in Indonesian discourse, not as it is generally perceived in the West. For further details see Niels

priyayi values. He hates being referred to as *Raden Mas*, regarding it as a demeaning and meaningless title. His father, too, preferred to distance himself from the palace tradition 'because he had no taste for refined but insincere Javanese etiquette.'[1] (BBM, 26) Subsequently Teto's hatred of palace values is rivalled only by his hatred of the Japanese. He believes, somewhat simplistically, that all *priyayi* and upper-class Indonesians are pro-Japanese, that it is the common people and the villagers who despise the Japanese, but who are powerless to do anything about it. (BBM, 55)

That powerlessness, however, derives from what he calls 'the villager mentality' (*mental-mental serba kampungan*) of the country, a mentality which both facilitates the Japanese imperialist mission and also makes the people easy prey for 'the evil provocation and influence that calls itself nationalism'.[2] (BBM, 34) Like Sjahrir, he rejects the nationalist movement's utopian view that 'a country and its people amount to the same thing.' He dismisses as misguided their belief that 'if a country gets its freedom it would follow naturally that its citizens would get theirs.'[3] (BBM, 62)

Teto has great difficulty reconciling himself to both the reality of a Republican victory and the possibility of an independent Indonesia. His paradoxical situation is brought home to him when he asks a Dutch officer how long he has been in the Indies. In response to his reply of 'You mean in Indonesia?', Teto feels 'cut to the quick to hear this ignorant Dutch peasant uttering the word "Indonesia" with such respect.'[4] (BBM, 126) The irony is reversed much later in the novel when Teto, attending Atik's PhD defence, notices that he is the only member of the audience

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Mulder, *Mysticism & everyday life in contemporary Java*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1978 especially chapter 5.

[1] karena ia tidak suka basa-basi Jawa yang halus tetapi banyak yang tidak jujur.

[2] hasutan dan pengaruh jahat yang menyebut diri nasionalis

[3] menyangka seolah negara sama dengan rakyat... Jika negara merdeka, orang mengira rakyat otomatis merdeka juga.
Teto's line of thought here echoes Fanon who, as Said points out (1994, 331), makes the case for 'liberation as a *process* and not as a goal contained automatically in the newly independent nation'.

[4] Hatiku tiba-tiba tertusuk. Belanda petani totok tolol ini menyebut hormat Indonesia.

wearing a batik shirt. 'Maybe I'm the most nationalistic here,' he thinks. 'What a joke, an ex-KNIL officer turned nationalist!'[1] (BBM, 201)

Himself possessed of a "divided consciousness", Sjahrir asked the question , 'Which is to be our basis, the West or the rudiments of feudal culture which are still to be found in our Eastern society?' (cited in Legge 1988, 33) Later, however, he rejected the notion that such a choice must be made, declaring that the idea of capitalistic West and servile East was a thing of the past, and irrelevant to the forging of a new culture. (cited in Foulcher 1993c, 235) Teto, while somewhat ambivalent about his Dutch ancestry, nonetheless believes that the Asian races ('bastards, all of them'[2] {BBM, 57}) owe a debt of gratitude to the white colonial powers for taking steps towards setting them free from sadism and servility. He acknowledges the desirability of cultural syncretism but rejects the way this is manifested in Indonesia as a slavishness to Western ways, reinforcing the coolie mentality established by centuries of feudal rule and colonialism.

The concerns expressed by Teto in *Burung-burung manyar* and Sjahrir in *Our struggle* have also been echoed by Mangunwijaya in his non-fiction writing. He recently wrote (1997a):

> (M)ankind will only become truly responsible when the people consistently resist the urge to pander to those in power. In other words, rid themselves of the slave mentality which is perpetuated by flattering one's superiors and crushing one's inferiors underfoot.[3]

Mangunwijaya also shares Sjahrir's hatred of fascism:

> Along with every other rational-minded citizen of my country, I detest the crude fascism of the military.[4] (Mangunwijaya 1986c, 103)

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[1] Rupa-rupanya aku yang paling nasionalis. Hahaha, ex KNIL yang nasionalis.

[2] bajingan-bajingan benar seluruh ras Asia ini

[3] manusia berwibawa sejati memang hanya dapat tampil maju jika rakyatnya memang konsekuen tidak suka pada orang kuasa belaka. Dengan kata lain, tidak bermental jongos, budak atau babu yang cara hidupnya hanya dapat bertahan dengan menjilat atasan dan menginjak bawahan.

[4] Dunia fasis kasar kaum militer tidak saya sukai, sama seperti yang dirasakan seluruh rakyat bangsa saya yang masih nalar.

One of Mangunwijaya's aims in *Burung-burung manyar* appears to be a fusion between Sjahrir's concerns and some of the - apparently contadictory - values and stories of the *wayang*. It is an ambitious project which illustrates Mangunwijaya's commitment to synthesis and syncretism and situates him as part of a stream of New Order intellectual discourse which embraced inclusiveness and plurality.

The "perang kembang"

Burung-burung manyar as a whole can be read as a *perang kembang* from the *wayang*, the "trial by fire" of the hero 'in which the play's crisis begins to flower'. (Brandon 1970, 25) The *perang kembang* symbolises the attempt by the hero to defeat his egotistical desires. For Mangunwijaya (1986c, 103-4), Teto's "trial by fire", and that of the Indonesian nation, begins when he casts himself off from his own circle and sets out on an alternative path.

The novel can also be read as a series of minor *perang kembang*, perhaps the most significant of which occur during the last four chapters of the novel, when Teto is re-united with Atik and is forced to come to terms with his feelings for her.

When Teto returns to Indonesia in the 1970s, he brings with him the knowledge that massive computer fraud is being perpetrated by the oil company of which he is a director, and it threatens to cripple the Indonesian economy and potentially that of the entire Asian region. He must decide whether to keep the secret to himself, or expose the fraud and lose his job. With support from Atik and Jana, he chooses the latter, thus committing an act of treachery upon his own company and jeopardising his employment prospects. He sees it differently however - not to expose the fraud would be to commit an act of treachery upon his country.

Resisting his physical desire for Atik to the end, Teto instead pays for her to accompany Jana on the pilgrimage to Mecca, a step intended to strengthen the bonds of their marriage as well as fulfil the dying wish of Jana's father.

A celebration of hybridity

What conclusions can be drawn about the fate of the protagonist of *Burung-burung manyar*, namely the Indonesian nation?

Initially, Teto's cultural affiliations are less vacillating than are Minke's in the "Buru Quartet". Teto never invokes his *priyayi* status; he is unequivocally awaiting the return of a Dutch government. His hybridity is genetic. However, he, too discovers that not everything in his native culture needs to be discarded as feudalistic, subservient and primitive. His meeting with Sjahrir and his encounter with dignified Republican soldiers mark turning points in his thinking as he endeavours, like Sjahrir, to articulate the conditions needed for the development of a new, vital and truly independent Indonesia. While Sjahrir was denied the chance to put his ideas into practice, Teto's reappraisal and celebration of his *Indo* status can be read as an affirmation of his (and Mangunwijaya's) commitment to syncretism and the rejection of narrow nationalism as the basis for the Indonesian nation. Teto gives shape to this idea of syncretism through a reappraisal and celebration of his *Indo* status as 'an infusion of new blood for the Indonesian people as they faced the brand-new post-revolutionary world.'[1] (BBM, 190) It is a sentiment often expressed by Mangunwijaya in his writings about the face of the "post-Indonesian" generation. The new breed of *Indo*s, he claims, are not like the Eurasians of colonial times, caught between two worlds and belonging to neither. As Teto learns to do, the current generation of *Indo*s take great pride in their syncretism.[2]

By the end of *Burung-burung manyar* Teto's *perang kembang* has given birth to the face of an idealised new Indonesian nation. Like Teto, it is multicultural, outward-looking and receptive to new ideas. Born out of the fire and energy of Soekarno, it has been given finer definition by Sjahrir's concern for

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[1] infusi darah baru bagi bangsa Inlander yang mengalami situasi serba baru sesudah revolusi politik dan revolusi bersenjata dulu itu.

[2] See for example Mangunwijaya 1991c

rationality, respect for individualism and contempt for feudalist traditions. It is a nation where there is no place for nationalist utopianism or jingoism. It is a nation that will be populated by a new generation of "post-Indonesians", the protagonists of *Burung-burung rantau*.

Burung-burung rantau

> When, several decades ago, we fought for Indonesian independence, we faced a big problem: If Indonesia were to become independent, then how would we define that independence? How would we direct and give shape to the nation of Indonesia in the future?[1] (Soe Hok Gie 1995, 69)

If *Burung-burung manyar* is in part an exploration, and a tentative celebration, of the place of syncretism in the post-revolutionary Indonesian identity, then *Burung-burung rantau* may be read as a sequel, as an attempt to give finer definition to the notions of heterogeneity and hybridity. While both novels engage with Soe Hok Gie's question about defining and directing the newly independent state, *Burung-burung rantau* goes a step further in its more assertive depiction of a national identity which goes beyond the post-revolutionary. As mentioned above, it is an 'essay in novel form', a novelistic exploration of Mangunwijaya's notion of "post-Indonesian" culture. Although admitting that "post-Indonesian" culture eludes a precise definition, Mangunwijaya describes it as plural, multi-dimensional, dialectic, logical, tolerant, humble (in the face of the new and overwhelming questions facing mankind), respectful of human rights, accepting (although not uncritically) of science and technology, and concerned about the plight of the poor and the oppressed. (Mangunwijaya 1987b, 143)

The post-Indonesian generation

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[1] Ketika kita berjuang untuk kemerdekaan Indonesia beberapa puluh tahun yang lampau, kita menghadapi suatu persoalan besar: 'Jika sekiranya Indonesia telah merdeka bagaimanakah kita mengisi kemerdekaan itu? Bagaimanakah kita 'membentuk' dan mengarahkan *nasion* Indonesia di masa yang akan datang?'

Just as the questions posed in *Burung-burung manyar* echo some of the concerns of the *Polemik Kebudayaan* debates, in this novel Mangunwijaya's anticipation of a new post-Indonesian generation whose members have 'radar in their hearts which can easily pick up the ripples of universal values' (cited in Rae 1993, 249) and his promotion of globalism over regionalism, picks up on Alisjahbana's call for an Indonesian nation whose values are based on modern, rational Western ideology.

In *Burung-burung rantau* the transformation from Indonesian to post-Indonesian is enacted in the lives of the family of Lieutenant-General Wiranto and his wife Yuniati. Wiranto was a freedom fighter in the Revolution and his subsequent illustrious career has included serving as a foreign ambassador and as a state bank commissioner. The geographic parameters of the story are Greece, the cradle of Western civilisation and India, the source of much Eastern philosophy. These two cultures - representing West and East - provide the reference points for the development of the embryonic post-Indonesian nation.

The protagonist of the story is Wiranto's favourite daughter, the spirited Marineti (Neti), a postgraduate student in anthropology. She has four siblings: Anggraini (Anggi), a jet-setting businesswoman; Yuni's favourite son Wibowo (Bowo), a nuclear physicist who works in Geneva, and who in the course of the novel marries the Greek woman Agatha; Candra, a fighter jet pilot; and the last-born Edi, who has recently died from a heroin overdose.

The metaphor of the title cleverly conveys the most important feature of post-Indonesian society: migratory birds, while constantly moving in space and time, nonetheless have well-established habits, returning to the same place on approximately the same day each year. This idea of "returning" is also incorporated in the prefix "post-": we move on, but we take a lot of learned behaviour with us. We do not renounce our former condition, rather we carry it forward into something new. Mangunwijaya likens it to 'being proud of being an Indonesian at the same

time as loving one's regional culture. It's not simply a process of getting on the bus and leaving the becak behind.'[1] (Mangunwijaya 1995b, 323)

> A postgraduate for example is still a graduate, it's not as if he's become a "no-longer-a-graduate"...We [post-nationalists] are still nationalists, but our horizons are broader, we have insight into other dimensions of life which, with all due respect, weren't noticed by the earlier generation.[2] (Mangunwijaya 1995a)

In the following conversation Neti seeks to reassure her father that Bowo has not ceased to be "Indonesian" just because he is now also "post-Indonesian":

> 'Is Bowo still an Indonesian?'
> 'Yes of course he is, but in a different way. Maybe it would be more accurate to use the term "post- Indonesian".
> 'So he's not an Indonesian any more?'
> 'It's not as simple as that, the term post- means the same, but somehow changed. Your ID card identifies you as an Indonesian, and you would regard yourself as an Indonesian, but you're still a *wayang*-loving Javanese. In other words, you're post-Javanese. Just as a postgraduate is still a graduate, it's just that he's moved a bit further down the road.'[3] (BBR, 59)

It is Neti, however, who personifies the plurality, compassion, tolerance and humility which are the characteristics of Mangunwijaya's post-Indonesian society. Wibowo describes her as representing 'a nation which has freed itself from the superstitious, shackled mass.'[4] (BBR, 158) He perceives Neti as continuing Sjahrir's struggle against 'the shackling of the soul' (*kebelengguan jiwa*, BBR, 159).

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[1] bangga menjadi putra Indonesia dapat bersamaan dengan cinta budaya suku/daerah. Ini bukan proses naik bis sesudah meninggalkan becak.'

[2] Pascasarjana misalnya tetap sarjana, jadi bukan "sudah bukan sarjana lagi"...kami tetap nasionalis, tetapi lebih luas cakrawala kami, lebih menghayati dimensi-dimensi kehidupan lain yang maaf seribu maaf belum dilihat oleh generasi terdahulu.

[3] 'Apa Mas Bowo itu masih manusia Indonesia?'
'Masih, masih, cuma lain, mungkin lebih tepat manusia pasca-Indonesia.'
'Sudah bukan Indonesia lagi?'
'Bukan begitu, pasca artinya masih tetap sama, tetapi sekaligus menjadi lain. Papi di KTP dan nyatanya menyatakan diri berbangsa Indonesia, tetapi kan tetap orang Jawa yang suka wayang, alias manusia Indonesia yang pasca-Jawa. Pascasarjana kan tetap sarjana juga, tetapi meningkat.'
Mangunwijaya has often explored this notion of *pasca-* (post-) in his essays. See for example Mangunwijaya 1995b, 239-241

[4] bangsa manusia yang membebaskan diri dari gerombolan yang serba takhayul dan terkurung

Although ostensibly exemplifying the richness of cultural syncretism and the validity of the notion of "universal values", Neti's siblings are in fact little more than caricatures. Mangunwijaya fails to draw convincing characters in these four; at best they appear to be uncritical acceptors, at worst, victims, of westernisation. They come across as token Westerners who have largely renounced their Indonesian heritage.

Anggraini is a hard-nosed business woman for whom Indonesia is merely one stopping place out of many, a place to visit if there is a lucrative business deal in the offing. She is a *burung rantau* who, despite her assertion that she has 'not turned into a foreigner' (*tidak menjadi orang asing*, BBR, 109), is anchored in Indonesia only through her concern with prestige, money and social status which is part of the *priyayi* tradition. Her parents' shabby house and rural lifestyle are a source of embarrassment to her and she regards it as humiliating that they should have to go to Greece for Wibowo's wedding, given that Agatha's father is 'a common fish merchant from a remote island of an insignificant country.'[1] (BBR, 75) For Anggi, the wedding does not revolve around the bride and groom; it is 'a social event, a symbol of the Wiranto family...a way of asserting our place in society, of making sure we're known, of earning respect and prestige.'[2] (BBR, 110) Her late husband, the son of a retired colonel, had briefly attended the Dutch Military Academy, but had asked for a discharge because he 'felt uncomfortable having to work side by side with former guerrillas who had no idea of the appropriate demeanour of an internationally-recognised army officer.'[3] (BBR, 113)

Wibowo epitomises the capacity for technological sophistication in the post-Indonesian generation. He works as a nuclear and astrophysicist in Switzerland. It is he who uses the term "post-nationalist" and, picking up on a theme

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[1] saudagar ikan biasa di suatu pulau terpencil negara yang tidak berarti

[2] suatu *social event*, suatu manifestasi eksistensi keluarga Wiranto,...untuk menyatakan kita ini ada di tengah masyarakat, dan kita harus diperhitungkan, hadir sebagai orang dan keluarga terhormat dan bermartabat.

[3] tidak bahagia disuruh bekerja bersama bekas-bekas gerilyawan yang tidak tahu etiket kesopanan opsir tingkat internasional.

from *Burung-burung manyar*, maintains that it is possible to be a patriot without being jingoistic. He also persuades Neti to change her original thesis topic, which dealt with the link between the Renaissance and human self-image. The Renaissance, he tells her, is largely a Western phenomenon; she should be operating at a global level and he suggests she examine 'the effect of an understanding of the cosmos (micro- and macro-), post-Einstein, on traditional societies, especially transitional societies in Indonesia'.[1] Wibowo, however, appears to be a master of rhetoric; in spite of what he says, and despite Neti's reassurances to her father, he has retained little of his native heritage. This is manifested (in a Freudian slip?) when he says (BBR, 155),

> Saturnus is the symbol of time, or in *your* neck of the woods it's Batara Kala.[2] (my italics)

Wiranto and Yuniati, whose values are in many ways diametrically opposed to those of their children, to the point that they wonder if they have become 'post-parents' (*pasca-orangtua*, BBR, 113), can only observe, in a less than dispassionate manner, the transformations taking place within their family, a microcosm of the emerging post-Indonesian generation. Despite Wiranto having 'a modern outlook' (*selalu modern*) and being 'open to new things'[3] (BBR, 19), by his own admission he feels that he is becoming more and more conservative (*udik*) as he gets older, by contrast with his children who are increasingly progressive (*hilir*).[4] He is concerned about Neti's increasingly left-leaning political tendencies, and he has difficulty coming to terms with Anggraini's ruthless business acumen, which in his eyes does not befit her status as a woman. In addition, Wiranto's deterministic view of his own life as having been controlled by forces outside himself ('I was pushed, pulled, elevated, demoted, stationed, demobilised, and so on and so forth, and finally

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[1] dampak pengertian semesta kosmos makro maupun mikro sejak Einstein bagi pandangan hidup manusia tradisional, khususnya yang sedang bertransisi di Indonesia

[2] Saturnus lambang sang waktu atau di kalangan kalian Bathara Kala

[3] selalu haus belajar hal-hal yang baru

[4] *hilir-udik* literally means downstream-upstream, but in Java has come to be synonymous with traditional-progressive, or orientated to one's roots-orientated to the outside world

put out to pasture[1] {BBR, 54}) is rejected by Neti as outdated in an age where each individual takes responsibility for his or her own destiny, an age in which, as Candra puts it (BBR, 167),

> we won't be manipulated, we take an active role in politics, we are proactive.[2]

Wiranto regards the erosion of traditional values in Indonesia as negative; Neti, on the other hand points out that erosion can be a positive force - with its formation of deltas and river valleys, erosion has produced a fertile and productive Indonesian archipelago. This is a view also expressed in Mangunwijaya's non-fictional writings where he maintains that

> thanks to erosion the previously infertile acid soil of the swampy chasms have been transformed into fertile prosperous valleys, replete with civilisation and culture.[3] (Mangunwijaya (1995b, 10)

It is Neti and her paramour Gandhi Krishnahatma from India ('the ancestral home of Indonesian culture, *nenek moyang kebudayaan kita*', BBR, 204) who exemplify the potential for a plural, compassionate, tolerant, humble and technologically competent post-nationalist society which results from the blurring of the binarial poles of East and West.

Krishnahatma, who calls Neti Dianwidhi because Marineti sounds too "western" (BBR, 212), is an Oxford graduate in microbiology who is currently studying in Heidelberg. Despite being of the Brahmin caste, he defies all the traditions and prohibitions of his religion and has dedicated himself to doing good works among India's downtrodden *harijan* caste. Like Mother Theresa, he is a symbol of international humanitarianism. When Neti contemplates the possible fate of Mother Theresa were she to attempt to carry out her humanitarian mission in

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[1] aku didorong, dihela, diangkat, diambil lagi, ditempatkan, didetasir, diapakan lagi, sekarang dipurnakan.

[2] kami tidak mau dipolitiki, kami ikut berpolitik, main aktif

[3] berkat erosilah lembah-lembah tanah ngarai yang dulu rawa-rawa tanah asam tidak subur menjadi lembah-lembah subur makmur penuh peradaban dan kebudayaan.
These sentiments are also expressed in Mangunwijaya's essays 'Budaya yang Menculik Kita' (1987a) and 'Karena Iba Hati dan Solider' (1995b, 239-241)

Indonesia she concludes, in a wry comment on the parochial, inward-looking attitude of the country's leaders, all of whom belong to her father's generation, that such welfare programs would be prohibited by the Social Welfare Department, by the Minister for Political Security, by the Coordinating body for National Security. In short, Mother Theresa would be too threatening for SARA.[1] That Mangunwijaya himself regards Mother Theresa, for whom compassion and humility knew no political or geographical boundaries, as a model for the post-Indonesian citizen is evident in his comment (1986b, 10),

> Only when the new generation is capable of producing people like Mother Theresa, who managed to extend beyond the boundaries of her native Albania, will we truly be able to call ourselves a fully mature "Pancasila" nation.[2]

Krishnahatma is eventually a victim of the unreconstructed values of his parents, and towards the end of the novel Neti is devastated by the letter she receives from him in which he tells her that he must accede to his parents' wishes and marry a girl of their choosing.

While Wibowo and Candra have reached the pinnacle of technological know-how, it is Neti and Krishnahatma who personify Mangunwijaya's call for a critical approach to the uses of science and technology. Although Neti's research area is anthropology, she is receptive to ideas of a more scientific nature, commenting to Pak Barijo, her supervisor that 'the world of science is constantly in pursuit of countless new and amazing ideas.'[3] (BBR, 138)

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[1] SARA = suku, agama, ras, antar-golongan - anything to do with ethnicity, religion, race and "inter-group" relations (usually interpreted as class tensions)

[2] Barulah apabila generasi muda kita mampu menghasilkan manusia-manusia seperti Mother Theresa yang juga sudah mampu mengatasi batas tanah air Albanianya, maka kita dapat disebut Panca-Silais dewasa.
That Mangunwijaya should use Mother Theresa as a model for a truly "Pancasila" nation is of course ironic in a country where, Pancasila notwithstanding, 90 percent of the population is Islamic. It also highlights Mangunwijaya's own "outsider" status as a Catholic priest in Indonesia. (My thanks to Keith Foulcher for drawing my attention this.)

[3] dunia sains selalu mengejar sekian banyak ide yang serba baru, serba mengejutkan

When he suggests incorporating her work with the poor into her postgraduate work, she acknowledges that science may well provide the solutions to the problems of poverty, but modifies this by saying (BBR, 140),

> I used to be a worshipper of science and technology, which I regarded as guardian angels for the lowly and the poor. But with the passage of time I've begun to have my doubts; it's not that I've become anti-science, that would never happen, but there's something ... it's hard to put into words.[1]

Pak Barijo completes her explanation by suggesting that science operates in the realm of the rational, whereas our daily lives are in general driven by emotional, irrational forces - feelings, appetites, human nature, even the machinations of political and economic power. Bowo has retained none of the "emotion" supposedly typical of the "East"; Neti, on the other hand, while arguing for logic and reason as the appropriate *modus operandi* in post-Indonesian society, nonetheless acknowledges the role of relativism in contemporary thinking. She comments that it is not enough to be able to describe physical reality, what is important is to describe 'how *we as humans* understand that reality'.[2] (BBR, 338) The argument for subjectivity in science is put forward elsewhere by Mangunwijaya[3] and personified in this novel in the character of Krishnahatma, who although doing his PhD in the "hard" scientific area of biotechnology, is nonetheless still informed in his views by the philosophy and mythology of his native India. In his search for the truth Krish is able to draw upon both scientific precision and philosophical fluidity, unlike Wibowo who, in response to Neti's claim that God is beyond space and time, retorts,

> We physicists can't blithely discuss this or that without a sound rational basis.[4] (BBR, 309)

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[1] Dulu memang saya tergolong kaum pemuja sains dan teknologi yang saya anggap sebagai malaikat-malaikat keselamatan bagi para dina miskin itu. Tetapi dengan pergi dan datangnya sang waktu, saya mulai menyangsikan itu; bukannya saya berubah menjadi anti ilmu pengetahuan, mana mungkin, tetapi ada sesuatu yang ... yang sulit saya katakan, Pak.

[2] bagaimana *kita manusia* memahami realita itu

[3] See Mangunwijaya 1986b and 1986c

[4] kami kaum fisika tidak bisa begitu saja omong ini atau itu tanpa pendasaran rasional yang kokoh.

The East-West binary

In 1931 Faure, expressing a view later echoed by Alisjahbana, made the claim that 'unless the Oriental learns to be rational, to develop techniques of knowledge and positivity, there can be no *rapprochement* between East and West.' (cited in Said 1991, 253) As Said points out (1991, 206-207), discussions of imperialism have always taken certain binaries, such as the emotional/rational one, as a *sine qua non*. Mangunwijaya has asserted that

> we must learn to abandon such polarised views as, 'Western culture is materialistic, liberal and free (or Communist and evil), whereas Eastern culture is spiritual and collective in the style of the Pancasila. The Western approach is always colonial and militaristic, whereas the East is protective, integrated, etc.[1] (Mangunwijaya 1986b, 13)

Despite this assertion, however, the search for the post-Indonesian identity in this novel is contained within the "given" of the East-West binary. But while the novel is defined by this frame of reference, which is a feature of the universal humanist tradition in Indonesia, Mangunwijaya does explore the possibility of a post-Indonesian society resulting from the breaking down of the binary, a society whose heterogeneous culture is characterised by the universal values of tolerance and compassion, but still draws upon the richness of the local heritage. This rapprochement between East and West is suggested in the novel by Pak Barijo:

> West-East no longer exists yet still exists. The East has become, and continues to become, more like the West. But there are a few indications that the opposite is also taking place, the West is becoming more like the East. Tiny signs, but not insignificant.[2] (BBR, 283)

Wibowo and Anggraini provide the sites for the acting out of the conflict between emotion and rationality which is bound up in the East-West binary,

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[1] Kita akan belajar untuk meninggalkan cara memandang hitam-putih seperti: kebudayaan Barat adalah materialistis, liberal serba bebas (atau komunis serba iblis), sedangkan Timur spiritualistis, kolektif gotong-royong, berjiwa Pancasila. Sikap Barat selalu kolonial militeristis, sedangkan timur bersifat pengayom, manunggal dengan rakyat, dan sebagainya.
See also 'Budaya Pascaindonesia Sudah Datang' in Mangunwijaya 1987b

[2] Barat-Timur tidak ada lagi, tetapi toh tetap ada. Timur sudah dan semakin menjadi Barat. Namun sebaliknya sudah ada tanda-tanda sedikit: Barat menjadi Timur. Terlalu sedikit memang tetapi cukup signifikan

Eastern peoples traditionally being perceived as "emotional" and *ipso facto* in a weaker position than the rational West.

Wibowo, in the unquestioning adoption of western values which typifies Neti's siblings, appears to have renounced emotion completely. Neti describes him as a 'gauche laboratory test tube' (*botol laboratorium yang kaku*, BBR, 164) and, in a comment inferring that the rational/emotional binary is in fact one that cannot be blurred, and furthermore, that science and emotion are mutually exclusive, she depicts Wibowo and his scientific colleagues as being essentially emotional cripples:

> Physicists, especially nuclear physicists, although they can master the complexities of esoteric mathematics, when it comes to women, are still in kindergarten.[1] (BBR, 22)

Anggraini, for whom compassion is an unproductive, and therefore useless emotion, is impatient and irritated by Neti's attempts to improve the welfare of the poor in the slums of Jakarta. Anggi regards their poverty as structural, as part of a global phenomenon, which the efforts of one individual can do nothing to alleviate. She dismisses Neti's social welfare activities as being a self-indulgent waste of time. Furthermore, she is mystified that, years after his death, her parents and Neti should still be mourning the loss of Edi. While insisting that she doesn't have a heart of stone, she nonetheless urges them to look to the future instead of the past. She is concerned that what she regards as Edi's cowardice has been passed on to Neti, who is escaping reality by becoming a do-gooder. (BBR, 105) Anggraini is also dismissive of Wiranto's concept of love as being spontaneous, irrational and essentially blind. Such a notion is, in Anggi's eyes, 'a simple definition suitable for a simple agrarian world'[2] (BBR, 106) and inappropriate for the sophisticated modern world in which even love can be made to conform to systematic thinking.

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[1] doktor-doktor fisika, apalagi yang nuklir, itu umumnya pandai matematika tinggi yang ruwetnya seperti mihun, tetapi tentang perempuan belum tentu melebihi pengetahuan TK

[2] rumusan sederhana untuk kaum sederhana dunia agraris

Although Neti describes him as 'a fanatic nationalist' (*nasional totok fanatik*, BBR, 292) and a 'traditional *pribumi*' (*pribumi tradisional*, BBR, 349), Candra appears to have adopted the trappings, although none of the substance, of Western culture. He displays the symbols of Westernisation like a tattoo - loud, superficial and often crude. The most obvious manifestation is his liberal use of the English language. His acceptance of liberal sexual mores is implied when he suggests to Neti that she go travelling around Greece, unescorted, with her new friend Gandhi Krishnahatma.

Like Anggraini, Wibowo and Candra, Edi is a victim of the forces at work in contemporary society, but his fate is sealed before the novel begins. While Wiranto's reaction to Edi's addiction is shame that the family's copy book has been blotted, Neti, who is compassion personified, believes that he turned to drugs as a form of protest 'against everything that he regarded as evil but nonetheless all-powerful, so powerful that he, as the youngest child of the family, felt he could not take a stand against it in conventional ways.'[1] (BBR, 39)

While *Burung-burung rantau* purports to depict the nature of the "post-Indonesian" generation, Mangunwijaya has not been able to escape the context within which the universal humanist tradition has operated in Indonesia, namely that certain binaries - male/female, advanced/backward, and especially East/West - are "given". A subtle shift then frequently occurs, whereby East remains East and West becomes "Universal". Even in contemporary cultural debate the unselfconscious identification of "West" with "universal" remains current. The writer and essayist Budi Darma (1990, 18), for example, unambiguously endorses this standpoint:

> From the mid-1970s, the question of making the choice between the West and the East had been resolved. Moving westward simply means moving towards universalism, a move towards making Indonesia an integral part of modern world culture.

[1] Melawan segala yang dia anggap jahat tetapi berkuasa, begitu kuasa sehingga dia sebagai anak muda, lagi bungsu, merasa diri tidak berdaya melawannya lewat jalan-jalan yang lazim.

Darma goes on to assert that 'the movement towards universalism is a movement towards enhancing the dignity of man himself, without being unnecessarily impeded by his environment.' (Darma 1989, 29) In many respects *Burung-burung rantau* is a novelistic expression of these sentiments. Ultimately, and despite the tentative signs of plurality and heterogeneity in the characters of Neti and Krishnahatma, in this novel Mangunwijaya has been unable to avoid falling into the familiar trap of packaging "West" and "Universal" together, and continuing to depict them in a binarial relationship with "East". The polarised views which Mangunwijaya argued should be 'abandoned' are in fact carried forward in this novel. He has failed to find what Bodden (1996, 66) describes as 'a position between the simple advocacy of national tradition and the advocacy of a foreign-dominated modernity.' Even Neti admits that she would prefer to be thought of as a Westerner than an Easterner, her own personality being more orientated towards individualism than eastern communalism. Similarly, Pak Barijo, despite hinting at the possible blurring of the East-West binary, ultimately concludes that

> whether we admit it or not, and whether we like it or not, the culture and lifestyle of every corner of the globe is becoming increasingly dominated by Western culture.[1] (BBR, 283)

Whither the nation?: the utopian vision

The idealised Indonesian nation postulated by Mangunwijaya in *Burung-burung manyar* and *Burung-burung rantau* is born out of a dialogue in Indonesian intellectual circles which began with the debates of the *Polemik Kebudayaan*, in particular the views of Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana. These novels can be contextualised in a literary and intellectual tradition with its origins in those *Polemik Kebudayaan* debates, which were predicated on the "given" of an East-West binary. This tradition continued through the internationalism and secularism of the

[1] seluruh kebudayaan dan gaya hidup di seluruh penjuru dunia semakin didominasi oleh budaya Barat, entah kita mengakui atau tidak, senang atau tidak.

"Sjahrir Circle" to the universal humanism of the *Angkatan 45*, and later to the universalism of the signatories of the *Manifes Kebudayaan.*

Burung-burung manyar and *Burung-burung rantau* come from the same mould as the fiction of Alisjahbana. Generally regarded as the literary doyen of universal humanism, Alisjahbana expounded his "grand vision" through rather dry epic novels such as the aforementioned *Layar terkembang* and *Grotta Azzura* - described by Teeuw (1986, 165) as 'a cultural philosophy cast in the form of a novel'. Through his novels Mangunwijaya too presents fictionalised articulations of his "cultural philosophy", in particular of his own version of universalism, which encompasses a rejection of narrow nationalism and a celebration of cultural syncretism.

It is in *Durga Umayi* that Mangunwijaya distances himself from this literary tradition, and moves towards the anti-realist end of the realist - anti-realist continuum and the neo-regionalist end of the nationalist - neo-regionalist continuum.

Durga Umayi - "anti-epic"[1]

> The creature man lives in forever encountering pairs of opposites: good and evil, long and short, day and night, happiness and sorrow, man and woman. (Mulyono 1977, 65)

In *Durga Umayi* the development of post-Independence Indonesia is given a female voice in the protagonist Punyo Iin Sulinda Pertiwi Nusamusbida (affectionately known as Iin or Linda or Tiwi or Nus or Nussy or Bi).[2] The life of Iin's twin (male) brother, Brojol (meaning 'born swiftly and safely' in Javanese), takes a very different course from hers. Like the Indonesian nation, they were born of humble origins - the progeny of a marriage between a corporal from the *heiho*, the indigenous militia during the Japanese occupation, and a woman who makes her

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[1] Mangunwijaya notes on the back cover of the novel: 'This novel does in fact have the characteristics of an epic, ... but perhaps as a literary form it could be termed anti-epic'
(Novel ini pada hakikatnya bersifat epik, ... namun dalam bentuk sastra mungkin boleh disebut anti-epik)

[2] For a compelling account of the ways in which Mangunwijaya attempts to symbolically empower women in *Durga Umayi* see Bodden 1996

living selling cassava cakes. The gulf that develops between "the nation" and "the people" is symbolised in the contrast between Iin, who escapes her lowly past and accumulates power, fame and fortune through dubious means and Brojol, who, like other *wong cilik*, "little people", 'was content to follow his in-laws and to live as an ordinary farmer in a barren mountainous area.'[1] (DU, 6) However, as Iin learns in one of the numerous seminars she attends after she becomes an international lobbyist, the destinies of twins are very closely linked: 'even though they might be complete opposites in tastes and fortunes, they can nonetheless never be completely free of each other'.[2] (DU, 151) Like twins, "the nation" and "the people" are part of an organic unity, they are inescapably interdependent.

The state of the nation

In *Durga Umayi* Mangunwijaya, like the *dalang* in a *wayang* play, frequently employs the linguistic glossing known in Javanese as *kerata basa*. *Kerata* means "origin of a word" and *basa* means "language". *Kerata basa* thus means 'the understanding of a word based on its origins' (*pengertian kata berdasarkan asal-usulnya*).[3] However the device more frequently depends on punning and word-play. Producing an effect which is often humorous or witty, this linguistic device 'depends on dividing a word into syllables, then fitting together other words containing those syllables in a phrase that illustrates or is otherwise connected to the meaning of the original word.' (Keeler 1987, 251) In *Durga Umayi* one of the most significant linguistic manipulations of this kind lies in Iin's full name, Iin Sulinda Pertiwi Nusamusbida. The first part of her name can be read as "Insulinde", a Dutch name for the archipelago. "Pertiwi" (the name of the Earth Goddess) is the Indonesian name for "mother earth". *Nusa* is one of the Indonesian words for "island"; it forms

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[1] puas jadi petani gurem yang ikut mertuanya di daerah pegunungan kering kersang (*sic*) kerontang

[2] bahkan justru bertolak belakang dalam cita rasa dan nasib, tetapi tidak lepas satu dari yang lain

[3] This definition comes from *Kamus Bahasa Jawa-Bahasa Indonesia* Volume 1 (Jakarta: Departemen dan Pengembangan Bahasa, 1993)
For example, the Javanese word *wedang* derives from *we* meaning ‘water’ and *dang* meaning ‘boiled’; hence the meaning ‘boiled water’.

part of the word *nusantara* meaning "archipelago" which is often used to mean "Indonesia". *Musbida* is a twist on the acronym *Muspida*[1] (*musyawarah pimpinan daerah*), a body comprised of regional leaders whose tasks include ensuring the smooth implementation of government policy in the regions and monitoring regional security. Instituted at the beginning of the New Order in 1967, it encapsulates the way in which the Suharto regime exerted its control throughout the archipelago. The implication is then that Iin, and the Indonesian nation she symbolises, is transformed from the colony Insulinde to the mature, but power-hungry, Nusamusbida.

At an early age Iin becomes aware that her gender has given her a special power, which she proceeds to use unashamedly in order to achieve her ends. Her life not only takes a different course from that of her brother, but also from that of most other women. She works as a washer woman for Soekarno and is on familiar terms with both the President and the first lady, Bu Fatmawati,[2] and she witnesses the proclamation of independence on the pavilion at Soekarno's house at Jalan Pegangsaan Timur 56 in Jakarta.[3]

During the Revolution, the narrator tells us, the people of Indonesia were exhorted to heed the principle of democracy. This principle, it is explained, lies in the Javanese etymology of the word, namely *wis-gede-moh-dikerasi* (DU, 52), which in Indonesian means *sudah besar emoh dikerasi* and in English 'once you're big (grown up) you don't like being pushed around'.

Iin joins the Republican army during the Revolution and 'learns to shoot and to fence, to throw a grenade, to do some *pencak silat* and judo, as befits a Srikandi.'[4] (DU, 57) She displays her bravery by presenting her Commander with the

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[1] I ascertained this in a discussion with Mangunwijaya in May 1998.

[2] Soekarno married Fatmawati in 1943 after divorcing his first wife Inggit. See Penders 1975, 76-7

[3] The proclamation was made at 10.00am at Soekarno's house, in an effort to avoid a clash with the Japanese army. It was a simple and somewhat makeshift ceremony attended by only a small crowd of people.

[4] belajar menembak dan beranggar dengan kelewang dan cara melemparkan granat dan sedikit banyak berpencak silat, yudo dan sebagainya seperti sepantasnya seorang Srikandi.
As mentioned above, Srikandi was one of the wives of Arjuna in the wayang stories, a fearless fighter and a commander in the Bharatayudha war. Soekarno described the first Indonesian woman guerilla to land in Irian Barat during the 1962 liberation campaign as "Srikandi"

head of an Allied soldier, whom she herself has decapitated. Later, she absconds from her battalion, consumed with guilt and shame that the Durga side of her character should have manifested itself so brutally. The Hindu goddess Umayi was cursed by her husband Batara Guru because she rejected his sexual advances, causing his seed to fall into the sea. She was transformed into a hideous ogre, the demonic Durga, and forced to leave the realm of the gods and to marry her own son Kala in Setragandamayit.[1]

Iin is captured by the enemy and brought before NEFIS, the Dutch Intelligence Service who beat, torture, rape and imprison her. After her release, she becomes a prominent figure in Lekra and Gerwani, the PKI-affiliated cultural and women's movements, and is a pivotal figure in events leading up to the 1965 putsch. However she then falls in love with an apolitical artist named Rohadi (*roh* meaning 'spirit' and *adi* meaning 'superior). In a bitter irony, Rohadi is arrested after the coup because of his association with Iin and is 'sent along with ten thousand political prisoners to an island far from Java'.[2] (DU, 132)

Iin on the other hand, having been in China at the time of the coup, escapes detection and, after 1966 (the beginning of the New Order in Indonesia), she adopts a "new religion", known as Aksmo. There are two suggested etymologies of this word: the "correct" one, the Javanese ***a****ji* ***k****aluwih* ***s****ejati* ***m****anungso* ***o****byor* ('a sincere prayer of the highest order for the glory of mankind') or the wickedly distorted Indonesian one, ***aks****elerasi* ***mo****dernasi* ('the acceleration of modernisation') (DU, 85).

She begins a new career as a high class call-girl which, combined with her position as owner and managing director of the Global Joy Corporation, makes her extremely rich. Equipped with three different personae and three different passports, she commands a great deal of influence on the international scene. The

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[1] Bodden (1996, 67) relates a less-commonly heard version of the story, in which Uma(yi) is a hermaphrodite.

[2] diangkut bersama dengan sepuluh ribu tahanan politik ke pulau yang jauh dari Jawa.
This is an obvious reference to Buru Island, where a political prison was established after the attempted 1965 coup for "hard-core" political prisoners, among them Pramoedya Ananta Toer.

Global Joy Corporation is involved in many large-scale multinational projects, including a massive international tourist park in central Java. The climax of the novel comes when she discovers, too late, that the park is sited on her twin brother's village, and that his land and that of the other farmers in the area has been dug up to build entertainment venues and hotels. When Iin discovers the decimation that has occurred there, one of the local villagers explains to her that they received 'compensation' from the project managers. The Indonesian term for 'compensation', *ganti-rugi*, literally means 'replacement (for) loss'. The villager redefines this (DU, 156) as *diganti dengan rugi*, meaning 'replaced by loss'.

In a grim twist of fate, Iin then discovers that Rohadi has died on the prison island. Although the cause of death is unknown, his headless body was discovered by the prison guards. Albeit indirectly, Iin has inflicted a second death by decapitation. Iin now finds herself in a world where 'the winners are always those who are bad'[1] (DU, 156) and where 'the little person is always defeated even though he is right'.[2]

At the end of the novel Iin's cover is blown and she is arrested and thrown into a prison cell for her Lekra and Gerwani activities. But when it transpires that she is in fact none other than the wealthy and influential Charlotte Eugenie Madame De Progueleaux (one of her three personae), she is told that her arrest will be treated as a "misunderstanding" and that she will be released, on the condition that she continues her work on the international tourist park development.

The fortunes of the new Republic are depicted through the trials and tribulations of Iin and the many metamorphoses she undergoes until the novel reaches its ambiguous end: will compassion triumph over greed? What direction will Iin, and the Indonesian nation, take? Will she find the means to 'destroy the terrifying dualism' (*menghancurkan dualisme yang menyedihkan*, DU, 183-4) which defines her?

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[1] yang menang selalu yang nakal

[2] orang kecil itu selalu dikalahkan meski benar

Like many Javanese shadow play stories, the novel is a *pasemon*: it tells a story (the development of the Indonesian nation) through another (the life-story of Iin). It draws heavily on mythology, and the tale is woven through a series of anecdotes rather than the explication of a linear plot. The *wayang* is also manifested in this novel in other ways, in its concern with 'the obvious dualities of the universe' (Anderson 1965, 6), in its linguistic manipulations, and in the use of *alihan*, the capacity of a character to assume the appearance, manner and voice of another. (Keeler 1987, 207)

Forever encountering pairs of opposites

The *wayang* concern with 'the obvious dualities of the universe' is introduced in the prelude, the *prawayang*, which tells the story of Batara Guru's curse upon his beautiful wife Uma(yi) - 'the beautiful, tall, sublime goddess with a name as sweet as Madukara honey.'[1] After his seed has fallen on the ground, Guru transforms Uma(yi) into Durga - 'the conceited, greedy, obscene queen from the foul kingdom of Setragandamayit'[2] (DU, vii)

Iin carries within her the 'DNA of Batari Durga' (DU, 83), and she is frequently distressed by the "schizophrenia" this causes her. After she has beheaded the Gurka soldier in cold blood, she spends sleepless nights reflecting on the two aspects of her personality: 'Uma, the beautiful sacred goddess, and Durga the evil murderer, torturer and cause of disasters...'[3] (DU, 64) Her later reflections upon her evil deed suggest that the ambivalence she feels is an inevitable outcome of the dualities of human existence:

> (I)t was bitter because she was forced to behave so cruelly, sweet because she really only did it to put an end to the suffering of the officer, who was beyond help, bitter because she had to behave like Batari Durga, and sweet because the Dewi Umayi element was still there, even though it was in a spiritual conflict and turmoil which will

[1] dewi cantik santing sani sanjai bernama manis semanis madu Madukara

[2] ratu rangah rakus rampus dari loka lanyau lanyah Setragandamayit

[3] Dewi Uma yang cantik sakti sekaligus Durga yang jahat pembunuh dan penyebab malapetaka penyiksa manusia...

> never subside as long as man dwells in *ngarcapada*, the realm between heaven and the underworld; between Wisnu's palace in the sky, where he rides the mythical Garuda Jetayu and the dark subterranean caves which form the realm of Basuki, the snake-god of the underground; between the liberated spirit and the binding worldliness of the body.[1] (DU, 111-112)

At the end of the novel Iin asks herself,

> If Batari Durga and Dewi Umayi are one and the same, does this mean that Iin is fated to a life full of ambiguity, dilemma, conflict and contradiction until the end of her days, and why, to what end?[2] (DU, 183)

This is part of the ambiguity of the *wayang* which, although purportedly idealising stability and harmony, nonetheless manages to project the notion that the dualities of male-female, sun-earth, mountain-sea, night-day, age-youth 'are necessary and complementary to one another. Day is not day without night, and youth is not youth without age peering over its shoulder.' (Anderson 1965, 6) In *Durga Umayi* (171-2) it is explained that

> there are those whose duty it is to be spectacularly rich and there are those who are given the honour of being obliged to be poor, but they are both poles of the same sphere, the duality of the whole cosmos, Yin and Yang, Pandawa Korawa...[3]

Perhaps, Iin ponders, she must contend with the Durga-Umayi conflict because she is a 'child of the Revolution' (*anak Revolusi*). Perhaps the spiritual conflict she is undergoing is inevitable in a world where 'heroes and bandits are members of the

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[1] pahit karena ia terpaksa harus berbuat keji sedemikian, madu karena alasannya waktu itu sungguh hanya untuk meringankan penderitaan perwira itu yang sudah tidak tertolong lagi, pahit karena harus berbuat seperti Batari Durga, dan madu karena unsur Dewi Umayi masih hadir juga, walaupun dalam suatu konflik batin dan kegusaran yang tak pernah dapat diredakan tuntas sepanjang manusia hidup di jagad-tengah *ngarcapada* antara Kayangan dan Dunia Bawah Tanah; antara istana angkasa Batara Wisnu yang menaiki sang Garuda Jetayu dan liang-liang gelap dalam tanah wilayah Batara Basuki, dewa para ular naga; antara roh yang merdeka berdaulat dan kebumian wadag yang mengikat menambat.

[2] Jika Batari Durga dan Dewi Umayi identik, apakah Iin akan bernasib menjalani hidup serba mendua serba dilema serba konflik serba kontradiksi terus-menerus sepanjang hayat, dan mengapa dan untuk apa dan demi apa?

[3] ada yang bertugas menjadi kaya raya dan ada yang punya kewajiban mulia menjadi miskin, tetapi kedua-duanya adalah dua kutub satu bola, dwitunggal semesta raya kosmos agung, Yin dan Yang, Pandawa Korawa

same army troop, where clever, honest statesmen have to sit in Cabinet next to opportunistic lackeys of foreign powers, where noble ideals and lofty thoughts have to share a bed with the treachery and greed of those who would steal one's honour as well as one's property, where fine words and powerful speech have to sing along with lying propaganda and filthy curses.'[1] (DU, 64)

Closely linked to the Durga-Uma binary is the male-female one. Iin recognises that 'the pretty face of the woman is needed as a balance to the ugly face of the male who is interested in nothing other than fighting with other men and overthrowing cabinets'[2] (DU, 77), but sexual ambivalence also features prominently in the novel. Femaleness is imbued with an indefinable, special, mysterious power (DU, 7) but, just as Dewi Umayi has a tough, ruthless side, Pertiwi's femaleness is also moderated by a ruthlessness which is at odds with most conventional notions of femininity: 'as a baby she was suckled on liquid dynamite'.[3] (DU, 8) Towards the end of the novel, when Iin visits her brother's village, her guide and driver causes great curiosity among the village children. (DU, 146) She is a creature, 'small yet with the characteristics of Srikandi' (*kecil tetapi Srikandi*) who 'could be a woman although she doesn't have breasts like the women in the village'.[4] (DU, 152) In *wayang* mythology, Srikandi, while a fine fighter, was also childless, perhaps proof for some of her ambiguous gender and sexuality. Indeed, in the Indian original of the *Mahabharata*, Srikandi is actually a man who has been changed into a woman. (Anderson 1965, 22)

Many of the dualities of the universe are manifested in the twinship of Iin and Brojol, who represent the 'forever encountering pairs' of male-female, rural-

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[1] pahlawan hidup satu pasukan dengan bandit, kapan negarawan pandai jujur harus duduk satu kabinet dengan petualang-petualang oportunistis jongos kekuatan asing, kapan kemuliaan cita-cita dan keagungan rasa pengorbanan harus membagi ranjang dengan pengkhianatan dan keserakahan perampok harta maupun kehormatan, kapan kata-kata agung dan amanat-amanat bertingkat tinggi harus menyanyi bersama dengan propaganda dusta dan umpatan-umpatan kotor porno

[2] wajah ayu wanita terutama diperlukan sebagai imbangan wajah buruk lelaki yang selalu ingin saling berperang dan menjatuhkan kabinet

[3] dia ... sudah menetek cairan dinamit ... sejak masih bayi.

[4] mungkin perempuan meski tidak punya susu-susu seperti simbok-simbok dan yu-yu mereka

urban, poor-rich, *kasar - halus*[1] and *maju-kuna*.[2] Iin is the ruthless, self-seeking power-broker; Brojol is the "little person". Their oppositeness is established early in the novel when their father claims that Brojol is a descendant of Dewa Basuki, the snake king of the underground, while Iin is a descendant of Dewa Wisnu who lived in the abode of the gods. Their difference is immediately apparent when the twins meet each other at their father's funeral:

> Their meeting on the occasion of paying their final respects to their late father was very warm on the part of the younger sister, who seemed to take no notice of the social status of the highland farmer whose character, strangely, seemed to be exactly the opposite of Miss Venus from the Capital City. The country bumpkin brother got the shock of his life when, without warning, he was hugged and kissed in front of everyone by his womb-mate who was only seventeen minutes his junior.[3] (DU, 17)

Brojol is happy with his simple rural lifestyle; Iin on the other hand 'is only content if a violent storm is raging around her, if she is in the midst of the roar of diesel engines and semi-trailers polluting the air with their black pungent fumes'.[4] (DU, 22)

The relationship and interdependence between rival siblings is a common theme in the *wayang* and Mangunwijaya (1997b, 57) has acknowledged that the story of the brothers Sukrasana and Sumantri influenced his telling of *Durga Umayi.* Sumantri was a handsome knight possessed of great supernatural powers, whose weapon, the bow Cakrabaskara, could destroy all arrogance and passion. However, he consistently betrayed his position as a member of the noble *ksatria* caste, unlike his younger brother Sukrasana, who, despite his ogre-like appearance,

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[1] refined-uncouth. For an analysis and examples of the *halus-kasar* typology, see Peacock 1968, 7-8; Geertz 1960, 232-351

[2] modern-old-fashioned. See Peacock 1968, 8

[3] Perjumpaan dengan abang kembar-dampitnya dalam kesempatan menghormat terakhir kepada sang ayah sangat hangat dari pihak adik, tanpa memandang status petani gunung yang watak perangainya aneh sekali seperti bertolak belakang dengan sang Punyo Bintang Kejora Ibu Kota, nah, si abang udik kaget setengah mati ketika tanpa persiapan atau penataran apa pun dia langsung didekap dan diciumi di muka umum oleh adik sekandungnya yang umurnya hanya tujuhbelas menit lebih muda dari dia.

[4] hanya dapat puas bahagia dalam badai marabahaya, di tengah raungan bising mesin-mesin diesel truk-truk gandengan yang mengentutkan asap polusi hitam harum

was noble of spirit, and deeply attached to his brother. Sumantri was given permission by his father to seek his fortune in the kingdom of Maespeti, but he refused to take Sukrasana along because of his ugliness. In Maespeti Sumantri was told that his services would be accepted if he could win the princess Dewi Citrawati for King Harjuna Sasrabahu. Sumantri succeeded but was then reluctant to give her up, so he challenged the king with his Cakrabaskara - if he won, he would possess not only the princess, but also the throne of Maespeti. When Sumantri fired the Cakrabaskara, King Harjuna Sasrabahu transformed himself into a gigantic ogre, caught the weapon and held Sumantri fast under the sole of his shoe. Sumantri was ordered to bring down the garden of Sriwedari from heaven. If he failed, his services would not be accepted. Sukrasana offered to help Sumantri as long as he then be allowed to stay with Sumantri. However, after Sukrasana had brought the garden down Sumantri ordered Sukrasana to keep himself hidden. One day Dewi Citrawati was frightened by the sight of an ogre and when Sumantri saw that it was his brother he threatened him with the Cakrabaskara, which fired by accident, killing Sukrasana. (adapted from Mulyono 1977, 55)

There are obvious analogies between the story of Sumantri and Sukrasana and that of the ambitious self-seeking Iin and her treatment of her humble brother Brojol and, by extension, between the ruthlessness of the power-brokers of the nation and their exploitation of the *rakyat*.

Manipulating the nation; manipulating the language

Another term for *kerata basa* is *jarwa dhosok*. *Jarwa* means 'to clarify' and *dhosok* means 'to push' - the phrase could thus be understood as 'to clarify by pushing'. "Pushing" is a most appropriate term for the use of language in *Durga Umayi*. Words are pushed to the very limits of their meaning through the use of a string of synonyms rather than just one word, through puns, and through the invention of new compound words in Indonesian. The language of the novel is of course predominantly Indonesian rather than Javanese, but the effect is similar to

that of the *dalang*'s use of *kerata basa* or *jarwa dhosok* in a *wayang* performance. For this reason the novel seems to demand to be read aloud, to be "performed" as a *dalang* performs a *wayang* lakon.[1] Wardhana (1991) suggests that the novel is like rap music.

The following examples demonstrate how the meaning of a word is "milked" by modifying a verb, adjective or noun with a string of synonyms, without punctuation to interrupt the impact of the words themselves. When Soekarno appears before an adoring crowd, they do not merely cheer, they 'boom cheer shout scream clap whistle'[2] (DU, 27) and Soekarno's voice ranges from being sweetly melodious to 'booming thundering trembling rumbling' (*berguruh berguntur bergetat bergelegar*, DU, 30). In her benevolent form, Umayi is not just pretty, she is 'beautiful graceful fair ravishing' (*cantik jelita putih lobak*, DU, 63). Compare this to the world of Durga, the world encountered by Iin when she joins the guerrilla army, defined by 'war and murder and conflagration and rape and pillage'.[3] (DU, 65)

The use of synonyms extends to the invention of new compound words, which also serves to "clarify" the meaning of the original word. Examples include *gegas-gesit* (busy and active, DU, 22), *gosok-gasakan* (rubbing and brushing, DU, 23), *penting-genting* (important and urgent, DU, 39), *pusing-puyeng* (dizzy and confused, DU, 51), *bosan-boring* (tedious and boring, DU, 100), *nikmat-lezat* (delicious and tasty, DU, 101). The etymology of words and phrases is manipulated in amusing ways. For example the Indonesian expression for "determination" is *kebulatan tekad*, which literally means "resolute roundness". Soekarno and Hatta's followers, we are told, are faithful to their leaders with a

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[1] This was clearly borne out at a conference on Postcoloniality in Indonesian Literature at Sydney University in May 1998, when Mangunwijaya read both from the *prawayang* and from the main body of the text of *Durga Umayi.* This oral rendering of the text added another dimension to it, and even members of the audience who spoke no Indonesian remarked upon how his reading transfixed them, breathing, as it were, life into the words on the page.

[2] berguntur bersorak berseru berteriak bertepuk bersiul

[3] pembunuhan dan pembakaran dan perkosaan dan perampasan

resoluteness which 'is really round like a soccer ball or children's marbles, really round, in anyone's language'.[1] (DU, 46)

While this focus on words does "push" the meaning of the words to the foreground, at the same time it detracts the attention of this reader from the direction of the storyline. Such digression from the "plot" is an integral feature of *wayang* performances.

Durga Umayi begins and ends with the narrator, in the style of the *dalang*, exploring various permutations of words. In some cases this results in meaning, in others it simply adds to the music of the novel, or perhaps, as Keeler suggests (1989, 156), implies 'meaning held in readiness rather than released in intelligibility'.[2]

The prelude ends with the *dalang*'s incantation:

> Yamaraja jayarama, yamarani, rinumaya,
> yasiraya yarasiya, yasirapa parasiya,
> lawagna lawagni, si rumaya si rumayi
> si hudaya si hudayi, si srimaya gedah maya,
> si dayudi
> si dayuda,
> hadayudi
> nihujaya... (DU, xi)

and the novel ends with,

> hooong ngo'ahoo, wilahoong hunglawi, aduh-aduh I'in Sulinda Sundali Pertiwi Perwita cewek wece, cakep lacep cantik ca'em, anak na'ak hijau jihau, sabda dabas amanat tanama, tujuh jutuh, belas lebas, delapan nadelap, seribu ubiser, sembilan sembalin, empatlima malitapem, semoga mogase, terdamai maidater, hatimu mutiha, oooh ho'oo Pertiwi Perwita, manis sinam, tercinta tacinter, musafir rifasum, pencari rencapi, ilham mahil, angin nag'in, empat tapem, kiblat tablik, merdeka kademer sejati tesaji, oooh oho'o I'in Ni'i, hamiiin mahin minhamin hamimin haniniiim nimhamiiin ... (DU, 184-5)

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[1] yang sungguh bulat seperti bola sepak atau bola bekel mainan anak-anak tetapi toh bulat betul

[2] Keeler elaborates this by adding: 'Effectiveness then replaces denotation...(L)anguage that is formulaic but obscure can be registered only in its effects. One cannot "grasp" ...in the sense of understanding...'

The latter is essentially a prayer that Iin (and hence the Republic of Indonesia) will find the right direction in her life. It translates roughly as follows:

> Iin Sulinda Pertiwi, you beautiful woman, immature child, (receiver of) the message of 1945, may your heart find peace, oh sweet beloved Pertiwi, seeker of inspiration, of direction, of true freedom, oh amen.[1]

However, like the prelude of the novel, it also derives much from the arbitrariness and linguistic manipulation of *jarwa dhosok*.

Alihan: transformations in the nation

In the *wayang*, one way in which a character can escape from the constraints of his/her status is to *malih*, to change form:

> When characters *malih* they overcome the constraints of their own identities. They impinge on other's behaviours without revealing anything about themselves. (Keeler 1987, 207)

As a plot device, this is known as *alihan*.

Like her alter-ego Durga, who frequently *malih*, Iin repeatedly reinvents herself in the course of the novel. These reinventions represent a compelling allegory of the transformations taking place within the Indonesian nation.

There are conflicting stories about Iin's origins: the 'village version' (*versi rakyat kampung*) depicting her as the daughter of a *heiho* corporal and a seller of cassava cakes and the '*priyayi* version' (*versi priayi eselon*) which suggests she is the daughter of Professor Gilbert Washington BSc. MBA PhD. ThD. and Bendoro Raden Ayu Theresia Ursula Nurhayati Tejakusumaningrum. (DU, 24) The intrigue surrounding this 'mysterious girl from the Progo and Elo Valley'[2] (DU, 25) adds to her popularity. In this respect she is like Semar, whom Keeler describes as 'something of a permanent alihan' and who provides much of the tension of the

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[1] I'in Sulinda Pertiwi, cewek cakep cantik, anak hijau, sabda amanat, tujuh belas delapan seribu sembilan empatlima, semoga terdamai hatimu, ooh Pertiwi manis tercinta, pencari ilham, angin empat, kiblat, merdeka sejati ooh I'in amin.

[2] gadis misterius asal Lembah Progo dan Elo

wayang because he suggests alternatively 'extraordinary powers, great selfishness, foolishness, and at times ... heroism'. (Keeler 1987, 207)

Iin fears that her prowess in murdering the Gurka soldier means that she is fated to live her life as the incarnation of the cruel and bloodthirsty Durga; after absconding from the army however, she is 'upgraded' and 'recycled' (*dirisaikling*, DU, 67) to become once again the tall, beautiful sublime Uma. In her transformed state, and armed with her excellent mastery of Dutch, English and French, she is set to take on the world as a high-class call girl, using her working names of Tante Wi, Zus Nus or *Madame* Nussy. (*Tante* is a form of address for a European, Chinese or Westernised woman. *Zus*, with colonial overtones, is used to address Westernized or Christian adult women. *Madame* is borrowed directly from the French.) 'Depending on the situation' (*tergantung pada situasi* , DU, 2), she is also addressed in the novel as *Mbak* (used with female Javanese), *Kak* and *Cik* (Indonesian and Chinese terms, respectively, for 'older sister'), and *Kamerad* ('comrade'). She is now the antithesis of the "feudalistic" Arjuna or even Kartini whom she likens to *sayur gudeg* (young jackfruit cooked in coconut milk - a specialty of Yogyakarta): tasty, but lacking in vitamins. (DU, 90) Her diet now encompasses *quenelles de brochet*, French cheeses, strawberries and champagne. Her humble origins in the valley of the Progo and Elo rivers are now disguised in the clever pun 'de Progueleaux' which she uses on her business card.

After 11 March 1966, Tiwi's face 'undergoes a complete transformation'.[1] (DU, 131) In Indonesia on that day, known as "Supersemar", power was formally transferred from Soekarno to Suharto. "Supersemar" is an acronym for ***Su****rat* ***Per****intah* ***Se****belas* ***Mar****et* (Letter of Instruction of the 11th March), the document authorising the transfer of power. It is also a clever pun adopted by the New Order government: the *wayang* clown-servant Semar is admired for his wisdom; anything labelled *Super*semar must thus be very wise indeed.

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[1] bermetamorfosa menjadi lain sama sekali

Thanks to plastic surgery Iin can now face the world in one of three guises (each with her own false diplomatic passport):

> as Mrs Angelin Ruth Portier of Meester Cornelis, daughter of Mr William Pieter Portier and Mrs Pailah Kromodimejo of Prontakan village in Magelang; as Madame Charlotte Eugenie, the youngest daughter of Francois de Xavier Pierre Charles Baron du Bois de la Montagne ... and Mrs Wang Ching Mei of Gang Pinggir in Semarang; as Tukinah Senik, the daughter of Colonel Yamashita and Mbok Tomblok of Cokrodiningrat in Yogyakarta.[1] (DU, 130)

Reading the text as historical fiction?

Unlike *Burung-burung manyar* and *Burung-burung rantau*, which are products of a well-established literary tradition in Indonesia, *Durga Umayi* is almost beyond genre. Relying heavily for its impact on intertextuality and on a familiarity with Hindu-Javanese mythology, it also has much in common with the non-discursive fiction of Putu Wijaya, to be discussed in the next chapter.

Durga Umayi compounds even further the challenges inherent in a reading of historical fiction. The historical references in the story, along with the depiction of actual historical characters, are familiar to most Indonesian-speaking readers. Yet the story is told in unfamiliar ways: it is hitched to the myth of Durga; it is related in a non-discursive style reminiscent of Gabriel Garcia Marquez; it uses language which parodies the conventions laid down by the *Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa*; and it extrapolates from the familiar "mother-earth" motif to a more substantial image of "woman as nation". A reader with no knowledge of post-colonial Indonesian history would be able to construct a story from this rambling pastiche of a tale, but may have trouble seeing the point of it. A reader familiar with that history, however, may encounter different challenges. At a seminar in Jakarta in 1996 Nirwan Dewanto, for example, expressed concern at what

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[1] sebagai Nyonya Angelin Ruth Portier kelahiran Meester Cornelis, dari ayah Mijnheer Willem Pieter Portier dan ibu Pailah Kromodimejo kampung Prontakan Magelang, alias Madame Charlotte Eugenie, puteri bungsu dari ayah Francois de Xavier Pierre Charles Baron du Bois de la Montagne...dan ibu Wang Ching Mei, Gang Pinggir Semarang, alias Tukinah Senik (diakukan janda Nyonya Nusa Musbida) dari ayah Kolonel Yamashita dan Mbok Tomblok, Cokrodiningratan Yogyakarta

he termed 'historical inconsistencies' in *Durga Umayi*.[1] Suggesting that his difficulty in this regard may stem from the fact that he is an Indonesian, he added, 'Maybe it would be different if it were read by a non-Indonesian'.[2] What his comments reveal above all, however, is the influence of the reader's expectations upon the construction of the text.

Durga Umayi is "like" a modernist text because it foregrounds its own textuality; it is "like" fiction because the protagonist is an 'inwardly complex agent'; it is "like" historical fiction because it 'recaptures the fleeting moment' and it is "like" history because it contains segments of unmediated history. But it is as "unlike" each of those genres as it is "like" them. Unlike Pramoedya's tetralogy, and unlike the other novels discussed in this chapter, *Durga Umayi* does not consistently provide a position wherein I as reader can define myself. Dewanto's problems with reading it also reflect this: as a reader he clearly wants to be able to unequivocally define his position as a reader and to construct the text accordingly.

Whither the nation?: the dystopian vision

Durga Umayi presents the underbelly of the hybridity, cultural syncretism and internationalism which were celebrated in *Burung-burung manyar* and *Burung-burung rantau*. At the end of *Burung-burung manyar* and *Burung-burung rantau* an unambiguously bright and shining new world beckons, a world in which the "universal values of the Pancasila" are the accepted credo. *Durga Umayi* ends on a much more ambiguous note: the narrator's poignant prayer for Iin and the nation hangs in the air. In short, if *Burung-burung manyar* and *Burung-burung rantau* present the utopian vision, then *Durga Umayi* presents the dystopian one.

In *Burung-burung manyar* Teto comes to regard his *Indo* status as representing 'an infusion of new blood' and in *Burung-burung rantau* Neti and her

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[1] ketidakkonsistenan pengarang pada fakta sejarah (See 'Novel Sejarah Tetaplah Sekadar karya Sastra' *Kompas* 6 September 1996)

[2] Mungkin...akan berbeda jika yang membacanya bukan orang Indonesia
Dewanto also said that he was bothered by historical inaccuracies in Pramoedya's tetralogy, and that as a reader he needed to know whether the novels were 'pure imagination or descriptions of a concrete situation' (suatu khayalan semata atau kondisi konkret)

siblings embrace a purportedly healthy new cultural orientation that is "post-Indonesian". By the end of *Durga Umayi* Iin reinvents herself through three Eurasian transformations, reflecting the international connections of the New Order regime. Previously she was *cantik santing sani sanjai* (beautiful tall gracious sublime), now she is *kaya raya cantik molek ideal indo* (wildly rich drop dead gorgeous in an ideally *Indo* way).[1] (DU, 136) However, in the process Iin has lost her identity, her self-respect and her self-image: she (and the Indonesian nation she symbolises) has become a non-entity, as a result of 'surgical operations using sophisticated technology and foreign bank accounts which, while extremely healthy, were acquired through fishing in the murky waters of the post-independence political crises'.[2] (DU, 137) She has become an even more barren version of Anggraini from *Burung-burung manyar*: 'rich in material goods but poor in love, devoid of sincerity, without identity.'[3] (DU, 137) She is 'no longer Iin Sulinda Pertiwi, but there's no telling who she is, is she Angelin Ruth or Charlotte Eugenie or Tukinah Senik..'[4] (DU, 137)

While *Burung-burung manyar* is a novelistic depiction of Mangunwijaya's abhorrence of "narrow nationalism" and his admiration of Sjahrir, and *Burung-burung rantau* introduces his idealised "post-Indonesian" generation of the future, the dystopian vision in *Durga Umayi* is underpinned by another of Mangunwijaya's concerns, namely the place of the "little people", the *rakyat*, the *wong cilik*, in the nation-building project.

Like Pramoedya, Mangunwijaya is an admirer of Multatuli, in particular of the way in which he is seen to have championed the oppressed and the

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[1] I have borrowed Bodden's evocative translation of this phrase. Bodden points out (1996, 78) that the negative connotations of Iin's new *Indo* appearance contradicts the celebration of diversity of racial backgrounds which is suggested earlier in the novel (DU, 19-20), a diversity which Mangunwijaya himself (1991c) believed enriches Indonesian culture.

[2] pembedahan teknologi canggih dan konto bank-bank asing di luar tanah air yang biar berlimpah tetapi hasil lobi dan pemancingan dalam air keruh intrik politik kemelut pascakemerdekaan

[3] kaya materi tetapi miskin dalam cinta, kosong dalam kesejatian, hilang identitas

[4] bukan Iin Sulinda Pertiwi lagi, tapi entah tidak jelas apakah Angelin Ruth apakah Charlotte Eugenie ataukah Tukinah Senik...

powerless. Himself of the opinion that 'modern writers always defend the oppressed against all forms of power'[1] Mangunwijaya (1986d) describes his mission as

> promoting humanitarianism...justice, emancipation, civilisation and honouring the beacons of truth, while opposing dishonesty, tyranny, etc. And because it's usually the poor who are the victims of dishonesty and tyranny, in my writing I, like other writers, try to rehabilitate them to some extent.[2]

It is a mission which dominated Mangunwijaya's life in the 1980s, notably during the time he spent living with *wong cilik* on the banks of the Code River in Yogyakarta and his involvement with the Kedung Ombo villagers.

The twinship of Iin and Kang Brojol in *Durga Umayi*, while it encapsulates both the agonistic relationship between the *wong cilik* and the "nation" as well as their interdependence, stops short of suggesting a utopian vision as to how the often conflicting needs and ambitions of the two can be reconciled.

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Like the reading in chapter two my reading in this chapter privileges the socio-cultural conditions of the production of the novels under examination. Again, this involves the examination of several 'complex affiliations', the first of which is the extent to which Mangunwijaya's own views on nationalism, nation-building, "post-nationalism" and the place of the *rakyat* are projected into the novels.

The second affiliation is that between the novels and their historical setting, namely the circumstances surrounding the birth and maturing of the new Indonesian nation.

My reading also examines the ways in which the *wayang* and Hindu-Javanese mythology have been reinvigorated and endowed with new meanings to

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[1]sastrawan moderen pada dasar hatinya selalu membela orang-orang yang tertindas oleh semua bentuk kekuasaan

[2]pengangkatan peri-kemanusiaan...keadilan, emansipasi, pembudayaan, penghargaan kepada pijar-pijar kebenaran, perlawanan terhadap yang dusta, yang sewenang-wenang, dan sebagainya. Dan karena dalam hal-hal semua itu seumumnya kaum miskin kecillah yang menjadi korban, maka tulisan-tulisan saya, seperti penulis-penulis lain juga, saya usahakan agar mengangkat mereka sedikit.

produce narratives which are patently of and for the twentieth century yet which project the values of an enduring heritage of Javanese story-telling.

Hindu-Javanese stories are also a feature of the work of Putu Wijaya, to be discussed in the next chapter. But they are only one feature from the inventory of narratives and literary tropes which Wijaya weaves into his typically discursive tales. He uses "neo-regionalism" in a markedly different way than does Mangunwijaya, yet, as the reading in chapter four will demonstrate, his stories can be contextualised within an Indonesian social context and as part of an Indonesian literary tradition.

CHAPTER FOUR

"ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM": ALLEGORY, TROPES AND *SASTRA TEROR*

Aesthetic Experimentation

The aesthetic experimentation favoured by Indonesian writers like Putu Wijaya and Danarto is viewed by some as a manifestation of a so-called "counter-culture" (*budaya tanding*), a spin-off from the fact that some artists have been unable or unwilling to express themselves directly using the forms favoured by the prevailing cultural orthodoxy.[1] Other commentators have identified this type of non-conventional and non-realist fiction as "anti-intellectual", discourse which challenges the premises upon which epistemology is based, namely rationalism, positivism, empiricism and historical fact. (Hadi, cited in Atmaja 1993, 2) Writers such as Iwan Simatupang, Danarto and, later, Wijaya disavowed the notion that literature should be driven by ideas. Implicitly or explicitly, they rejected not only Alisjahbana's belief that it is the task of literature to create a new mankind, but also Chairil Anwar's poetry of ideas and the socialist realists' plea for ideology-driven literature. (Mohamad 1980, 36-7) Although in their ideological outlooks these writers had much in common with the signatories of the Cultural Manifesto, their anti-intellectualism took them on a different path from that favoured by other signatories like Mochtar Lubis and Wiratmo Sukito. They were also accused by some commentators of escaping into fantasy and experimentation in order to mask

[1] See for example Kristanto 1996 and Nadjib 1995, 3-11.

the fact that they were not socially committed. For his part, Wijaya turns the question of social commitment around:

> The question which must be asked is, can a particular society or reader make use of a literary work?'[1] (Wijaya, 1982b, 4)

Subscribing to the theory that a literary work is in fact a creation of its reader, he claims, like the proponents of reader-response theory, that a work is "dead" until life is breathed into it by a reader.

Unlike the use of *wayang* references in Mangunwijaya's novels, where the effect is to produce a quality of neo-regionalism that intersects with a largely realist discourse, Wijaya weaves elements of the *wayang*, such as indirection, humour and de-emphasis on character development, into his excursions into fantasy and aesthetic experimentation. As Rafferty suggests (1990, 106), his literary style is suggestive of Javanese and Balinese cultures yet at the same time it remains rooted in contemporary Jakarta. Wijaya himself coined the term "new tradition" (*tradisi baru*) to describe 'contemporary artistic expressions that are inspired by, but not tied to, regional art forms'.[2] His avowed aim is to engage his readers and his audiences in a kind of "mental torture", in which they are forced to confront the absurdity and cruelty which inheres in the minutiae of daily existence. His wish to inflict "mental terror" on his readers is well documented.[3] The fluidity of the *wayang*, for which Aristotelian notions of narrative coherence are irrelevant, suits this purpose well, providing the opportunity for digressions, anecdotes and challenges to conventional notions of time and space.

Anti-intellectualism

Putu Wijaya helped establish the novel of "anti-ideas" as a new literary trend in 1980s Indonesia. Characterised by features such as non-realism,

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[1] Pertanyaan yang mestinya diucapkan adalah apakah satu masyarakat tertentu, apakah pembaca, sudah dapat memanfaatkan karya sastra?

[2] See Wijaya 1997b, 8-16

[3] See for example Wijaya 1987a, 1995a, 1995b.

non-linear plots, little character development and (often black) humour, these "anti-intellectual" novels were seen to develop as a reaction to the preoccupation with a "literature of ideas" of writers like Alisjahbana and later, as suggested in the last chapter, Mangunwijaya. Alisjahbana, in a 1983 essay urging the need for a literature of ideas in contemporary Indonesia, once dismissed Wijaya as being 'trapped at the dead-end of modern art and literature'. (Alisjahbana 1983, 14) Much of Wijaya's long 1985 essay 'Proses' is devoted to an attack on the notion that "real" literature deals with 'the big canvas, with big ideas, with fundamental human problems, with eternal values.'[1]

Wijaya's plays, short stories and novels represent an intersecting of neo-regionalism and anti-realism in contemporary Indonesian literature. While Mangunwijaya's novels, in their appropriation of *wayang* characterisation and their experimentation with form, are at a remove from both the unequivocal realism and nationalism of Pramoedya's tetralogy, Wijaya's are at the very opposite end of the literary spectrum.

In contrast to Pramoedya, whose depiction of "the nation" is inscribed in carefully-crafted, realistic prose, and to Mangunwijaya, who never loses sight of "the nation as protagonist" even in the wildest flights of fancy in *Durga Umayi*, Wijaya's work is bizarre and fantastical, suggesting an influence from the absurdist tradition, from surrealism and perhaps from Artaud's "theatre of cruelty". Wijaya has acknowledged the influence on his writing and thinking of a variety of writing traditions and writers:

> I've never denied that I can be influenced by whatever I experience, hear, see etc. (I think that Balinese people are basically very receptive to outside influences.) I was influenced by *Waiting for Godot*, for example, because I once played the part of Pozzo... It's possible that I've been influenced by what other people have said about the novels of Iwan [Simatupang], because I've never actually read them myself. It's actually reached the point where I'm afraid to read them, in case

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[1] sapuan kwas besar, tentang ide yang besar, tentang persoalan manusia yang lebih hakiki. Tentang nilai-nilai yang akbar.
As far as I know, this lengthy essay is unpublished. It is in the archives at the Pusat Dokumentasi HB Jassin in Jakarta.

> my own writing then merely becomes a duplicate of his.[1] (Wijaya 1984, 294)

His eclectic accumulation of influences from both his own Balinese heritage and Javanese traditions which he began to absorb during his days as a student at Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta is suggested in his comment that

> I always try to delve to the very soul of a particular tradition, not just restrict myself to its form. When I'm putting on a performance I don't try to project a sense of "Balineseness" or "Javaneseness" through costume or staging techniques. I try to do it by ensuring that the spirit of the tradition is released through my performance, that it projects an awareness of the cultural environment from which it emanates. Take a Balinese painting for example. It has no perspective. I'm talking about traditional Balinese paintings here. The canvas is chock-full of images. All of them are significant. And I take the essence of that crowded canvas - where dreams and reality are as one - as the starting point for my own work.[2] (Wijaya 1984, 300)

As the following discussion demonstrates, in his incorporation of the anti-real into the novels *Sobat* (*Friend*), *Teror* (*Terror*), *Kroco* (*Insignificant* [3]) and *Byar pet* (*On and Off* [4]) Wijaya re-visits the familiar themes of existentialism and absurdism yet elaborates those themes in ways which have their basis in regional Indonesian traditions and which reflect the eclectic way in which Wijaya has appropriated them in order to achieve his aim of "terrorising" his readers. In his refutation of critics who accuse contemporary writers like Danarto and Sutardji of

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[1] Saya tidak menolak sampai sekarang bahwa saya bisa terpengaruh oleh apa saja yang saya alami, dengar, lihat dan sebagainya. (Saya kira orang Bali memang gampang sekali menerima pengaruh pada dasarnya.) Misalnya terpengaruh oleh *Waiting for Godot*, karena saya pernah main sebagai Pozzo... Mungkin saya memang terpengaruh oleh cerita-cerita orang tentang novel Iwan, sebab saya sendiri sampai sekarang belum pernah membacanya. Bahkan malah menjadi takut kini membaca, kalau ternyata apa yang saya buat ternyata hanya duplikat dia.
Iwan Simatupang (1928-1960) was perhaps the first writer writing in Indonesian to incorporate the concerns and techniques of the Theatre of the Absurd into his writing, which was also informed by his interest in Existentialist philosophy.
Elsewhere Wijaya has staunchly rejected any similarities between his writing and that of Iwan Simatupang. See Wijaya 1987a.

[2] Saya selalu berusaha menggali kekayaan tradisi dari jiwanya, bukan bentuknya. Kalau saya main drama saya tidak berusaha ke Bali-Balian, atau ke Jawa-Jawaan lewat kostum atau cara pengadegan. Tapi pada kebebasan jiwanya dan pada kesadaran lingkungannya. Misalnya lihat lukisan Bali. Di situ tidak ada perspektif. Maksud saya lukisan Bali tradisional. Kanvas penuh sesak. Semuanya penting. Hakekat dari penampilan itu di mana impian dan kenyataan bersatu juga menjadi dasar titik tolak saya bekerja.

[3] *Kroco* is a Javanese word meaning a soldier of the lowest rank.

[4] *byar pet* refers to the 'on-off' of blinking lights

merely "importing" non-Indonesian literary conventions, Wijaya (1985, 24) alludes to the difficulty of separating what is borrowed from what is in fact an intrinsic part of local traditions:

> Is it true to say that they [Danarto and Sutardji] have about them the whiff of imported flatulence, or is it the flatulence of their ancestors of which they reek, flatulence which appears to be imported because nobody ever suspected that their ancestors could fart in such a way?[1]

"Reading" the novels

The concern in these novels with the familiar themes of existentialism encourages a particular type of reading, a reading which looks for evidence that they are part of a wider discourse in world literature which deals with the perceived essential realities of the human condition - the themes of life, death, isolation and communication explored in the 1950s and 1960s by writers like Sartre, de Beauvoir and Larkin. However, a more contextualised reading is also possible, a reading which highlights the use of *plesetan* and *tontonan,* aspects of local tradition which in fact may be employed to undermine the 'tyranny of order' (*tirani kemapanan*, Latif and Ibrahim 1996a, 40) which is both a feature of traditional Javanese social structure and the mainstay of political hegemony in contemporary Indonesia.

One way in which that hegemony exerts its control is through the promotion and management of *bahasa Indonesia*:

> One of the main concerns of New Order language policy has been to standardise Bahasa Indonesia and to determine and encourage "correct usage"... This emphasis on correct language is not a purely aesthetic concern. The desire to standardise language has been cited as an example of language manipulation, 'as a means to the establishment of a desired cultural regime'. (Hooker 1993, 273)[2]

Such standardisation and manipulation presents a fertile breeding ground for the creation of political jokes, *plesetan* and reinterpretations of acronyms, abbreviations and slogans. These informal channels of communication can provide a

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[1] Apa betul mereka bau kentut import, atau justru kentut nenek-moyangnya yang terlihat sebagai kentut import karena orang tak pernah menduga nenek-moyang bisa kentut semacam itu?

[2] See also Foulcher 1990, 305

unique form of political participation for those who otherwise feel disenfranchised. (Latif and Ibrahim, 1996b) In similar fashion, the use of *plesetan* by writers like Wijaya may be read as a subtle way of subverting the power of the Indonesian language as an agent of cultural hegemony.

These novels display many features regarded as representative of the Theatre of the Absurd. They depict human beings outside social or historical context, waiting, trying to break out into freedom, caught in the dilemma that effort and indolence both result in futility, the inability to reach other people. Like absurdist plays, the novels stress situation rather than sequential events, images rather than discursive speech, universal types rather than objectively valid characters.

However, these themes are elaborated in a way comprising a blend of *plesetan* and Wijaya's own concept of *tontonan* (spectacle). A *tontonan* appeals to the visual senses and depends on images rather than logic. (The idea that his writing is meant to be performed as a "spectacle", rather than to be read, is also suggested in the fact that Wijaya enjoys performing public readings and dramatisations of his prose.)

Sastra teror

As mentioned above, Wijaya's trademark has become *sastra teror* ('the literature of terror').[1] He believes that the function of literature in contemporary Indonesia should be to "terrorise the reader". It is a notion which he expounds at some length in his essay 'Proses', where he claims that it is not enough for literature to be perceived as mere entertainment. It is misguided to regard the reader as some sort of idol who must be 'flattered, caressed, soothed' (*dipuji, dibelai, dielus*). It is not even enough to attract the attention of the readers so that they are moved to tears or laughter. What is demanded of contemporary literature is that it engage the reader in 'a dialogue, an exchange of ideas, a tournament of the mind... The readers should

[1] See for example Wijaya 1995a; 1995b; 1997c

be encouraged to think as they are confronted with various issues, resulting in an "inner experience".[1] (Wijaya 1985, 26)

Sastra teror "terrorises" its readers by undermining the accepted order of things, by suggesting alternative ways of "seeing" and by blurring the line between reality and fantasy. Wijaya (1997c) describes the target audience of his *sastra teror* as 'those who are asleep. In a stupor. Those who don't know themselves. Or those whose own self-importance has blinded them to the real issues. Those who are in a rut. Who have ceased growing. Who have closed themselves off. Those who are still trapped in a slave mentality.'[2] It is a sentiment suggested by one of the 'protagonists' of *Teror*:

> We can't just go on living in an uncomplicated way, we need some questions to animate us.[3] (T, 39)

Once mental terror has hit its mark, the readers 'find themselves in a state of chaos, but unable and unwilling to extricate themselves from it, until the terror is over.'[4] (Wijaya 1995a, 46)

Wijaya's novels are marked by unstructured plots, undefined protagonists and ambiguous temporal and spatial parameters. (He has stated, however, that when writing his early novels, *Bila malam bertambah malam* and *Pabrik*, he was in fact guided by a concern for logical plot construction. Later he became more concerned about whether or not the novel "spoke". {Wijaya 1987a}) These novels do not primarily attempt to tell an engaging story, nor to impart a clearly articulated social message. They are, rather, essays about human frailty. As Wijaya says in 'Proses', 'for the writer who wants to "disturb" his reader, the story

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[1] dialog, tukar pikiran, cuci otak ... Para pembaca diajak untuk berpikir serta mengalami berbagai hal, sehingga terjadilah peristiwa batin.

[2] Masyarakat yang tidur. Terlena. Lupa diri. Atau yang terlalu percaya diri sehingga buta terhadap persoalan hakikinya. Masyarakat yang macet. Tidak berkembang, tertutup. Masyarakat yang belum terbebas dari alam perbudakan.
See also Wijaya 1985, 13

[3] Kita tidak bisa hidup mendatar, harus ada pertanyaan-pertanyaan untuk membuat kita bergerak.

[4] berada dalam situasi yang kaos, namun tak sempat, tak mau, tak mau untuk meluputkan diri, sampai teror itu berakhir.

isn't important, the characters and the incidents are just his playthings.'[1] (Wijaya 1985, 15)

As a reader of *sastra teror*, I found my attention was engaged from the very first sentence, which usually presents a situation or incident which is startling, improbable or absurd. Niceties are dispensed with; *sastra teror* ignores the reader's need for context. *Teror*, for example, begins:

> Since acquiring her plastic heart, Susy felt that something had changed within her.[2] (T, 5)

Kroco begins:

> The leaves on the trees in the back garden always swayed when Warno was having a shit. The breeze would start up as soon as he had squatted down.[3] (K, 1)

Part of *sastra teror*'s impact also derives from seemingly gratuitous descriptions of violent or shocking events. Towards the end of *Byar pet* a bus passenger shoots himself for no apparent reason:

> Then he took out his pistol. It happened so quickly. Before I had a chance to collect my thoughts he had begun shooting. But not at me. He shot himself in the head, smashing it to smithereens. There were bits everywhere. Of his head. Bits of his head were strewn all over the place because he shot himself with his own pistol. As if in slow motion, the pieces of his head spattered everywhere. And then they re-formed themselves into his head again. His head was smashed into tiny pieces, but then re-formed itself again. The head of the aggressive passenger. Smashed again. His head was smashed again.[4] (BP, 151)

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[1] bagi orang yang ingin "mengganggu", cerita menjadi tak penting, apalagi tokoh dan peristiwa, kedua-duanya ia main-mainkan saja

[2] Setelah mendapat jantung plastik, Susy merasa ada yang berubah dalam dirinya.

[3] Daun pohon-pohon di kebun belakang selalu bergoyang-goyang, kalau Warno buang air. Angin mulai bergerak, kalau ia sudah jongkok.

[4] Lalu mengeluarkan pistolnya. Cepat sekali. Sebelum aku sempat berpikir ia sudah menembak. Tapi bukan ke arahku. Dia menembak kepalanya sendiri sampai berantakan. Berkeping-keping. Kepalanya. Pecah berkeping-keping karena ia tembak sendiri dengan pistolnya. Kepalanya berantakan jatuh perlahan-lahan. Dan kembali pada kepalanya. Kepalanya telah pecah berkeping-keping, tetapi telah kembali jadi kepalanya. Kepala penumpang yang galak itu. Pecah kembali. Kepalanya pecah lagi.

Like an absurdist play, these novels present 'a series of states of consciousness, or situations, which become intensified, grow more and more dense, then get entangled, either to be disentangled again or to end in intolerable inextricability.' (Ionesco in Esslin 1982, 190) Things happen, but they do not constitute a well-defined plot or a story.

Terror is the defining feature of human relationships in both *Sobat* and *Teror*, which expose the tyranny of friendship and the prison of marriage. Although the names of the characters in *Teror* change in each chapter and there is no plot or time-frame which logically connects one chapter to the next, by the end of the book, despite being distinguished by different names (Alimin-Amin-Wisnu-Bambang-Arthur-Gafur-Tigor-Ramli-Romi-Rio-Oka-Pian-Slamet and Susy-Santi-Warni-Antik-Pertiwi-Lina-Emy-Leila-Yuli-Nancy-Rahayu), the characters blend into each other, and it is obvious that the names are irrelevant; this is a study of a "generic marriage". In chapter 9, where the male character is named Romi, the doctor actually mistakenly calls him Alimin, the name applied to the male character in the first chapter. (T, 79)

Sobat and *Teror* also explore the concepts of the unfathomable loneliness at the core of every human being, and the powerlessness of an individual to ever take full control of his or her own life. The "protagonists" need relationships because they are unable to cope with the essential "aloneness" of the human condition, and because being in a relationship with another person postpones indefinitely the need to take control of their own lives.[1] But marriage and friendship are exposed as being fragile and transitory, carrying within them the seeds of their own destruction. The defining characteristic of marriage, for example, is depicted as impotence in all its forms: sexual impotence, emotional barrenness, physical inertia, spiritual nothingness, and, terrifyingly, powerlessness to escape. It is an impotence suffused with profound loneliness and isolation.

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[1] "Protagonist" is a rather unsatisfactory word to describe the characters in Wijaya's novels and short stories, which are almost invariably populated by "types" rather than finely honed characters whose lives are shaped by a logically constructed plot.

Both *Kroco* and *Byar pet* debunk the notion that human beings can ever really find meaning in their lives or ever really know themselves. We simply lack the means to discover the truth about ourselves and our place in the scheme of things. Human existence is depicted as a game of pretence and, like the characters in *Sobat* and *Teror,* the protagonists have neither the will nor the desire to take control of their own lives:

> My life is like a stone. Wherever I'm thrown, that's where I come to a standstill. If no external force comes along to kick me, I won't make any effort to move.[1] (BP, 2)

Wijaya has stated that his interest in the Balinese plastic arts has influenced his appreciation of all that is 'multi-focussed, a blending of dreams and reality, fantastic.'[2] (Wijaya 1987a) As in a traditional Balinese painting, in *sastra teror* the line between fantasy and reality is frequently blurred:

> He couldn't decide if this was a dream or reality. He glanced around. He could see himself, trapped in an impenetrable jungle. Was this real life or his own daydream?[3] (K, 108)

The narrative in *Kroco* is sustained by the idea that life is only a game of make-believe and if you pretend something for long enough, it will become real. It is a notion alluded to by Wijaya in 'Proses':

> There comes a point when we actually begin to act out our life, which is really like a stage. Then acting becomes a way of life. And over time we become forgetful and prone to deception because we have gradually become convinced of the roles we are playing.[4] (Wijaya 1985, 6)

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[1] Hidup saya seperti batu. Ke mana terlempar di situ membenam. Kalau tidak ada tenaga lain yang menendang, tidak akan mencoba beranjak.

[2] ...banyak fokus, membaurnya mimpi dan kenyataan, fantastis

[3] Apakah itu mimpi atau kenyataan, tidak dapat dipastikan. Ia menabur matanya ke sekeliling. Ia menyaksikan dirinya terjepit dalam sebuah belantara yang tak tertembus. Apakah itu kehidupan nyata atau lamunannya sendiri?

[4] Lalu hidup yang bagai panggung sandiwara ... benar-benar kita mainkan. Lalu bersandiwara menjadi gaya hidup. Lama-lama kita sendiri sering lupa dan tertipu karena perlahan-lahan peranan tersebut menjadi meyakinkan.

Warno, the protagonist of *Kroco*, genuinely believes that he can talk to trees. His wife merely pretends that she can, but when others start taking her seriously, she in turn begins to believe that she can get the weekly lottery numbers from the trees. As the reader, by the end of the novel I was attuned to the possibility of trees (and *becak*s) talking, so the notion no longer seemed ridiculous. However, having come to terms with the idea of trees talking, I was then asked to further suspend disbelief. One of the trees tells Warno,

> We don't know what the problem is. We're all sick. First of all it was a cough. Then a feeling of weakness. Since then we've been slowly dying. Perhaps it's AIDS.[1] (K, 109)

In both *Kroco* and *Byar pet*, Jakarta is the unraveller of reality. Warno is warned that in order to survive in Jakarta, 'you must become an expert at pretending'.[2] (K, 57) In *Byar pet* the protagonist Kropos, after having been on familiar terms with the bus driver and his off-sider during the long journey from his village to the capital city, upon their arrival in Jakarta suddenly finds that 'it was as if the two of them were different people than the ones I'd seen the previous day at the bus stop in my town. In the capital city they were like different creatures. The change was so drastic.'[3] (BP, 9) In Jakarta people he has never met greet him like an old friend and people he thinks he knows deny they have ever met. When he thinks he has come across an old "friend", Marno, his reaction is one of bewilderment:

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[1] Nggak tahu. Semua di sini kami sakit. Mula-mula batuk. Lalu rasanya lemes. Setelah itu mati perlahan-lahan. Mungkin AIDS.

[2] Ihu harus pinter main pura-pura

[3] keduanya seperti bukan orang yang saya lihat kemaren di stanplat kota saya. Di ibukota mereka seperti makhluk lain. Perubahannya begitu drastis.
The name Kropos is not actually applied to the protagonist until the final page of the novel, and even then it is ambiguous. The last lines of the novel read:
Just as my feet touched the ground I heard someone calling me. Very loudly.
'Kropos!'
I turned.
(Begitu menginjakkan kaki ke tanah, terdengar ada orang memanggil saya. Keras sekali.
'Kropos!'
Saya menoleh.)

> Yes. It was Marno. I'd swear it was Marno. And I didn't understand why it wasn't Marno. Why he had become Mr Sumarno.[1] (BP, 47)

In Jakarta the traffic policemen instruct traffic to stop at the green light and go at the red. (BP, 23) Life in Jakarta 'makes a person forget everything'.[2] (BP, 65)

Much of the blurring of dreams and reality in these novels derives from the instability and unreliability of human powers of perception which distort and befuddle the way the world is viewed. In *Sobat* and *Teror* human perception is distorted by the treachery of human relationships. Before their respective marriages, the protagonists of *Sobat*, Aji and Isak, view the world through an alcoholic haze, the defining feature of their friendship. Once Isak is married, and has promised to give up drinking, Aji bemoans the fact that Isak 'will never again be able to see the world as it really is!'[3] (S, 23) In *Teror*, Susy's powers of perception, as well as her emotions, have radically altered. One eye sees what she wants to see; the other one sees what she doesn't want to see. In the mirror she sees the reflection of a beautiful woman, yet at the same time she is able to penetrate behind the mask to witness ugliness and deceit lingering there. She can also hear the things that people are not saying, and she can "hear" people's destinies - accidents, windfalls, deaths. This further isolates her from those around her because 'no one would believe what she told them. What she felt. What she thought. What she went through. What she carried around inside her. "Because they don't hear the truth".'[4] (T, 42)

In *Kroco* and *Byar pet*, the city of Jakarta also has a sinister effect on the way in which the protagonists view the world. After working for some time in Jakarta as a *becak* driver, Warno's vision becomes impaired. The problem is that he can no longer see cars:

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[1] Ya. Memang itu Marno. Saya berani bersumpah itu Marno. Dan saya tidak mengerti mengapa ia bukan Marno. Mengapa ia menjadi Pak Sumarno.

[2] bikin orang jadi lupa segalanya

[3] tidak akan pernah lagi menatap dunia dengan wajar!

[4] ..tidak seorang pun percaya apa yang dikatakannya. Apa yang dirasakannya. Apa yang dipikirkannya. Apa yang dialaminya. Apa yang dipikulnya. 'Karena mereka tidak mendengar kebenaran.'

> He wasn't blind, nor was he short-sighted. It was just that cars of all types, irrespective of shape, model, country of origin, suddenly disappeared from his sight. They just vanished into thin air. Other related objects, however, such as tanks, ships and tractors presented no problem to him. He could see these things quite clearly...[1] (K, 83)

In *Byar pet* Kropos finds that he can see the world differently once he has purchased some German sunglasses:

> The glasses changed me. Even the street became different. It gave me a buzz to be able to really experience the change. And these were mere sunglasses. Imagine what changes could be wrought by acquiring a car, an aeroplane, a jacket, a weapon. What if the world really did change according to the outfit we wear.[2] (BP, 86)

When Kropos finally meets someone he knows at a bus stop on the way home, he is shocked to discover how much he has changed. Arthana (whom Kropos later decides isn't Arthana after all) denies that he has changed and Kropos is forced to admit that 'people never change, it's just that we see things about them that we didn't see before.'[3] (BP, 131)

Communication and miscommunication

The observation of the minutia of daily existence in these novels highlights the essential futility of attempting to communicate through language:

> I understand your language, do you understand mine, or are you going to force me to use yours?[4] (T, 97)

As Wijaya (1985, 6-7) puts it, 'the dictionary meaning of language can no longer be held true.'[5] In *Kroco* (92), Warno's boss sums it up in this way:

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[1] Ia tidak buta, juga bukan rabun. Tapi segala macam mobil, tak peduli bentuk, tahun, keluaran mana, tiba-tiba lenyap. Putih dan kosong seperti kena hapus. Sama sekali tak bisa dilihatnya. Padahal benda-benda sejenis, seperti motor teng, kapal atau traktor tak ada masalah. Semua masih tampak utuh, terlihat jelas sekali...

[2] Kacamata itu membuat saya berubah. Jalan pun jadi lain. Saya geli karena perubahan itu saya rasakan betul. Ini baru kacamata. Bagaimana kalau mobil, kapal terbang, jas, dan senjata. Apa dunia ini memang lain-lain di mata, sesuai dengan busana yang kita pakai.

[3] semua orang tak pernah berubah, hanya dari dulu-dulunya belum kelihatan

[4] Saya paham bahasa anda, apa anda paham bahasa saya, atau anda ingin memaksa saya memakai bahasa anda.

[5] Bahasa tidak bisa dipercaya lagi dengan keterangan yang ada di dalam kamus.

> It's all a problem of language. Everything becomes complicated because of the language difference.[1]

Concomitant with the lack of communication between characters is a lack of emotional rapport. The "normal" patterns of relationships between human beings are atrophied, emotions are warped, and in its most extreme form this manifests itself as cruelty and inhumanity. The characters in these novels do not really care for one another, nor do they "connect":

> She could go through a whole day with her eyes shut and her ears blocked. She had no need of other people's voices or insight. She turned herself into a fortress, or a lake.[2] (T, 47)

Effective communication rarely takes place in the novels because the characters don't listen to each other:

> 'Where do you live?'
> 'I don't know. Do you know where Pak Sutaryo lives?'
> 'Who did you say? Sumarno?'
> 'Yes. Pak Sutaryo.'[3] (BP, 76)

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[1] Semuanya adalah masalah bahasa. Semua jadi ruwet hanya karena perbedaan bahasa.

[2] Ia bisa hidup seharian dengan mata tertutup, dengan telinga tersumbat. Ia tidak memerlukan suara-suara dan pandangan dari luar. Ia menjadikan dirinya sebuah benteng, sebuah danau.

[3] 'Bapak tinggal di mana?'
'Saya tidak tahu.'
'Dik ini tahu di mana rumahnya Pak Sutaryo?'
'Siapa? Sumarno?'
'Ya. Pak Sutaryo.'

A similar conversation occurs in *Waiting for Godot* (Grove Press, 1954 , 16):

Pozzo: I present my self: Pozzo.
...
Estragon: He said Godot.
Vladimir: Not at all!
Estragon: You're not Mr Godot, Sir?
Pozzo: I am Pozzo! Pozzo!
...
Estragon: Bozzo...Bozzo
...
Pozzo: PPPOZZZO!
...
Vladimir: Is it Pozzo or Bozzo?
...
Estragon: I once knew a family called Gozzo

Words seem to have lost their function as signifiers, as Warno discovers in the following conversation with his fellow becak driver Parno. Warno has lost his ID card and is also penniless:

> Warno ate greedily. Parno just watched him.
> 'How long is it since you had your last meal?'
> 'Uh?'
> 'Is the food good?'
> 'No, not really.'
> 'Well if you don't like it how come you're eating it?'
> 'You told me to eat, didn't you?'
> Parno was taken aback.
> 'But if it doesn't taste good, you don't have to eat it!'
> Warno was getting confused. He stopped eating. Parno just kept watching him.
> 'You're hungry, aren't you?
> 'Yes I am. I've had nothing to eat since this morning.'
> 'Well, eat then. It doesn't matter if it's not very nice, just eat it. Why are you worrying about what it tastes like. Eating is not for pleasure but to make you strong. Do you understand? Come on, eat up.'
> ...
> Warno was mystified.
> 'A minute ago you told me to stop eating. How come you're now telling me to eat again? I'm getting confused!'[1] (K, 58-9)

In Jakarta Kropos finds that he can't make himself understood, despite the fact that he is speaking the same language as everyone else:

> 'Which way is the city?'
> 'It's a long way.'
> 'Very far?'
> 'Pretty far.'
> 'We're talking about Jakarta aren't we?'

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[1] Warno makan rakus. Parno memperhatikan saja.
'Sudah berapa hari tidak makan?'
'Ah?'
'Enak?'
'Sebetulnya tidak.'
'Kalau nggak enak kok dimakan?'
'Katanya tadi disuruh dimakan?'
Parno terkejut.
'Tapi kalau tidak enak tidak usah dimakan!'
Warno bingung. Ia berhenti makan. Parno terus memperhatikannya.
'Lapar nggak?'
'Ya, lapar, dari pagi belum makan.'
'Makanya makan. Biar tidak enak makan saja. Kok masih mikir enak. Makan itu bukan untuk enak-enakan tapi biar lhu kuat. Ngerti nggak? Ayo teruskan makan.'
...
'Tadi disuruh berhenti makan. Kok sekarang disuruh makan? Aku jadi bingung ini!'

'Where do you want to go?'
'To Jakarta.'
'This is Jakarta!'
'Which road do I take?'
'To where?'
> 'To the city. What's that road there called?...I'm new here and I want to go to Jakarta. This is the first time I've ever been here. Where does that road there lead to?'

'Where do you want to go to?'
'To Jakarta.'
> ...

'Ask the policeman. I'm new here. I don't know.'
> I couldn't help feeling that I wasn't connecting in my conversations with people from Jakarta. Was I speaking the same language?'[1] (BP, 26-7)

Metaphysical anguish, existentialist/absurdist themes

There is compelling evidence in these novels, as with his plays, that Wijaya shares with the existentialists and the French Absurdists a sense of metaphysical anguish at the human condition. In Indonesia, existentialism became a part of the Indonesian literary scene because it shared many of the same concerns as the universal humanist tradition.

As mentioned above, by his own admission, Wijaya may have been influenced by the writing style of writers such as Beckett, but he also claims that much of what might seem absurd in his writing is in fact a feature of everyday life in Indonesia, where 'when somebody dies, people laugh; when someone has an

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[1] 'Kota.'
'Kota masih jauh.'
'Jauh sekali?'
'Lumayan.'
'Jakarta kan?'
'Mau kemana sih?'
'Ke Jakarta.'
'Ini dia.'
'Jalannya ke mana?'
'Jalan ke mana?'
'Kotanya. Yang ada itu, apa namanya?...Saya ini baru datang, saya ingin ke Jakarta. Baru sekali ini saya ke mari. Itu jalan yang itu ke mana?'
'Kamu mau ke mana?'
'Ke Jakarta.'
...
'Coba tanya di pos polisi saja. Kita orang baru di sini. Kita juga tidak tahu.'
Saya bingung kok rasanya ngomong sama orang Jakarta belum menyambung-nyambung. Apa bahasa saya lain?

accident, others think it's funny; people spend their money on cassettes even if there's no food in the house.'[1] (Sunyoto 1995)

Ionesco describes the Absurd as 'that which is devoid of purpose... Cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all has actions become senseless, absurd, useless.' (cited in Esslin 1982, 23) The existentialists are similarly concerned with the absence of transcendent meaning in the human condition, but they express this concern in a lucid and logically constructed form. The writers of the Theatre of the Absurd, on the other hand, strive for an integration between subject matter and form by abandoning rational devices and discursive thought. Esslin (1982, 419) sums up their general purpose thus:

> The Theatre of the Absurd is concerned essentially with the evocation of concrete poetic images designed to communicate to the audience the sense of perplexity that their authors feel when confronted with the human situation.

Because values are warped and people can't remember what they are supposed to be doing, or why, in many absurdist plays trivial things are rendered extremely important and important things are reduced to insignificance. In Ionesco's *Victims of duty*, for example, the characters agonise about the precise spelling of a name, almost killing each other over it. In *Sobat*, Isak and Aji come to blows over a disagreement about which one of them was arrested on a particular New Year's Eve.

Like the audience of an absurdist play, as the reader of these novels I found myself presented with characters whose motives and actions seem incongruous, if not incomprehensible. They consistently over-react or under-react to a situation; they are either embroiled in an irrational frenzy or trapped in a prison of inertia. After their marriages, meetings between Isak and Aji are marked by either irrational anger and violence or inexplicable warmth and joviality, and sometimes both. Their conversations and arguments dwell solely on the past. They have no

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[1] Ada orang mati, tapi orang-orang tertawa, ada orang mendapat kecelakaan, malah ditertawakan, karena dianggap lucu. Orang membelanjakan uangnya untuk beli kaset sekalipun ia tak punya sesuatu untuk dimakan.

strategies for dealing with the future, as Aji says, 'What could be more important than talking about the things that have happened in your life?'[1] (S, 31)

In *Teror*, not only have Susy's feelings been deadened and her powers of perception altered, but her powers of judgment have been impaired and she is incapable of making a rational decision. She cancels an appointment with the psychiatrist, for example, because she wants to watch *Gremlins* on TV, but when she doesn't find the movie funny she turns upon her husband Alimin in a violent rage. His judgment, too, has been distorted. He finds Susy's ability to see different things with each eye unremarkable but he panics when he notices that her eyes are different colours, and insists that she see the doctor. He then sets out to destroy his own heart. In order to find out the most effective way to do this, he visits a heart specialist who (chain-smoking all the while) tells him that smoking has nothing to do with heart disease. The best way to destroy your heart, he goes on, is to fall in love. After a love affair with the girl next door, Alimin's heart has indeed been irreparably damaged and he needs a plastic one.

In *Kroco*, Warno becomes very agitated because one of his trees speaks to him in a strange accent, and so quickly that he can't follow what is being said - and this is in spite of the fact that Warno has instructed the tree to use the 'national language' (*bahasa nasional*). This aggravates Warno so much that he chops the tree down. When his wife expresses her concern, and accuses him of being mad, he threatens her with the axe. (K, 4-5)

Like the characters in an absurdist play, in *Byar pet* Kropos (whose name means "hollow" or "rotten") is immobilised by indolence. He has lost his ID card, money and notebook, the three things which give any meaning to his life, which prove that he actually exists. He realises that the most sensible thing for him to do would be to go home but, as he comments, 'to do that would necessitate making a decision. To make a decision one has to have courage. To have courage one has to have conviction. And I 'm a gutless coward who can never make a

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[1] apa yang lebih penting daripada membicarakan sejarah hidup?

decision.'[1] (BP, 4) Despite being almost penniless, he allows himself to be persuaded to spend some of his precious *rupiah* on a pair of sunglasses: 'I would have to have an excuse not to buy them'[2] (BP, 85), he reasons, apparently unable to grasp the fact that he is spending money he should be using to buy food, or a bus fare home.

Kropos himself is struck by the incongruity between the jovial manner of the newspaper-boy and the shocking news contained in the newspapers he is selling, which scream headlines such as 'Christine accuses her father of rape', 'Tragedy in the steambath, Part II', 'Corpse chopped up and wrapped in plastic', 'Mysterious dawn killer', 'AIDS hits the villages' and 'UFO attacks'.[3] (BP, 27-28)

Characters in absurdist plays are prevented from making sense of their lives due to their unreliable memories. For example, in Albee's *The American dream*, Mrs Barker calls on her parents every day but cannot recall why she has come. Having left behind his notebook, Kropos has no idea of the purpose of his trip to Jakarta or the people he is supposed to be visiting. He does remember that he wanted to visit a friend, but the only things he recalls about him is that he has an "s", a "k" and an "o" in his name, and that he likes eating *rujak* and *es alpokat*. (Finally, three pages before the end of the novel, on his bus trip home, he remembers that his friend's name is Kropos - the name which he himself responds to in the last line of the novel.)

Like Pozzo and Lucky in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Kropos spends interminable periods of time waiting - 'an essential and characteristic aspect of the human condition'. (Esslin 1982, 50) Herein lies the absurdity of human existence: despite our perpetual waiting 'nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes.' (*Waiting for Godot*, 28) Having finally decided to go home, Kropos's endless wait in the bus station evokes much of the absurdity which, Wijaya suggests, is a part of

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[1] Tetapi untuk melakukan semua itu diperlukan keputusan. Untuk memutuskan harus ada keberanian. Untuk berani mesti ada keyakinan. Padahal saya seorang pengecut yang tak berani membuat keputusan.

[2] Saya harus punya alasan untuk tidak membeli

[3] Christine mengadu sudah diperkosa bapak kandungnya; Tragedi di steambath part II; Mayat terpotong-potong dalam plastik; Pembunuh misterius di hari subuh; AIDS masuk desa; UFO menyerang

everyday life in Indonesia. Passengers are first of all told that the tickets are sold out, then the bus is delayed while the driver tries to find more passengers, then the driver goes missing, then they are delayed because a bridge is down. When they all demand their money back, Kropos is overlooked - it appears that he has become invisible.

Plesetan and Tontonan

Sastra teror makes its impact through startling and sometimes disturbing linguistic manipulation, through word play and semantic ambiguity. While recognised features of deconstructionist writing in the post-structuralist West, these are also part of the Javanese tradition of *plesetan*. (Heryanto 1995b, 105)

The defining characteristic of *plesetan* is punning. This can be as playful as *Ayam goreng to school* or as potentially subversive as rewording the acronym RSS (*Rumah Sangat Sederhana* - 'Very Modest Houses'[1]) to *Rumah Sangat Sengsara* - 'Very Miserable Houses'. As well as punning, *plesetan* can derive its effect from an unexpected use of words or the juxtaposition of the serious with the flippant, the sublime with the ridiculous, fantasy with reality, the literal with the metaphorical. *Plesetan* can occur when 'the grand themes are presented on the same platter as the trivialities'.[2] (Wijaya 1985, 24) The tone of a text can thus change within a page, within a paragraph, within a sentence. The lexical derivation of the word indicates what it is that *plesetan* does: *terpeleset* means to 'slip, to lose one's balance' and the prose of Wijaya's novels is nothing if not slippery - just when my reader-self felt I had a hold on the meaning and the tone of the text, it slips away.

The use of *plesetan* explains why, as Agusta writes on the cover of *Sobat*, the reader of a Putu Wijaya novel can 'laugh uproariously while trying at the same time to restrain his/her sorrow'.[3] Wijaya himself says, 'There is no comedy, no tragedy. It is all mixed.' (Wijaya 1987c) Because the events in these novels

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[1] The type of low-cost housing currently being built throughout Indonesia

[2] tema besar langsung dipersembahkan sekaligus dengan remah-remah sepele

[3] tertawa dan tertawa sambil menahan tangis dalam hati

resemble a series of snapshots, not necessarily related, a scene of apparent hilarity may be followed or preceded by one of great sadness.

Wijaya plays games with the language in a way which suggests that reality as we see it could in fact be viewed in a completely opposite way. On the first page of *Teror* Susy tells Alimin that her chest is 'constricted by something yet empty'.[1] (T, 5) This is echoed in *Sobat*, where Aji's father-in-law tells him that 'what is empty is actually full (*kosong sebenarnya adalah penuh*)'.[2] (S, 97) After his separation from Susy, Alimin has the following ambiguous conversation with a woman at a party:

> 'I don't work. I live. And that's the same thing as working.'
> 'Really?'
> 'And furthermore I don't have any faith.'
> 'How do you support yourself?'
> 'I don't support myself. Life supports me.'
> 'How did life discover you?'
> 'I collided with it at the crossroads.'[3] (T, 103-4)

In *Sobat*, Aji's attempt to clear his name from a charge of murdering Isak begins with him waxing lyrical but he quickly looks ludicrous when he becomes tongue-tied:

> Isak and I are one although we are two. If he is the soul, then I am the body. If I am the body, he is the soul. I mean, if he is thbody I am the soul.[4] (S, 89)

In *Byar pet*, a long tirade about the evils of contemporary society which touches upon family planning, the plight of unwanted children and divorce, is beginning to build up steam:

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[1] sesak oleh sesuatu tapi kosong

[2] This is apparently a Balinese notion, referred to by Wijaya in his essay 'Ada Tapi Tak Ada' (Wijaya 1997b, 88-91) where he speaks of something being 'empty but full, following the conviction of the Balinese - *kosong tapi penuh*, *yang diyakini oleh orang Bali*

[3] 'Saya tidak bekerja. Saya hidup. Dan itu sama halnya dengan kerja.'
'Betul?'
'Saya juga tidak percaya.'
'Bagaimana anda membiayai hidup anda?'
'Saya tidak membiayai hidup saya. Hidup ini membiayai saya.'
'Bagaimana hidup itu menemukan anda?'
'Saya menabraknya di perempatan jalan.'

[4] Isak dan saya adalah satu meskipun dua. Kalau dia jiwa, saya adalah tubuh. Kalau saya tubuh, dia adalah jiwa. Maksud saya, kalau dia tubuh, saya adalah jiwa.

> Does a child realise he is different from the others in his class because when he goes home, on weekends, holidays, if he's sick, he doesn't have two parents to care for him, as the other kids in the class do? It's true isn't it?

when, without pausing for breath, the next comment is,

> Do you want coffee or tea?[1] (BP, 15)

Sastra teror depends for much of its effect on the visual impact of the spectacle, what Wijaya calls *tontonan*. While the action of the novels doesn't usually lead very far, many of the incidents and images in them are visually startling: the reader is challenged to imagine the unimaginable.

The chilling portrayal of marriage in *Teror* is underpinned by a powerful metaphor that is also quite visual in its impact: the plastic heart. The protagonist, "Susy", has become emotionally barren, ostensibly because she has recently acquired a plastic heart (as a defence mechanism against the terror of marriage). Initially her husband "Alimin" begs her to have it removed, because he can no longer stand the "terror" of her coldness, but he eventually decides that the only way to stop the hurt is to ask for a plastic heart of his own. Although they eventually divorce, "Susy" and "Alimin" get back together when they are both in their seventies. She becomes pregnant and they both look forward to the birth of their child who, rather disconcertingly and again, visually challenging, will be thirty years of age at birth, a hermaphrodite and already equipped with a plastic heart.

When words are used in unexpected ways, or when a narrative takes an unexpected course, the result can often resemble a *tontonan*, which can be amusing, incongruous or shocking. One does not need to understand a spectacle to be attracted to it, nor does one need to be aided by the use of meaningful conversations. A spectacle can be interesting because it is surprising, strange, colourful, magical, noisy, horrific or unusual.

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[1] Apa dia sadar dia berbeda dengan anak-anak sekelasnya, karena kalau pulang, kalau hari minggu, kalau hari raya, kalau dia sakit, tidak ada sepasang manusia yang merawatnya seperti teman-temannya. Ya nggak. Kau mau kopi atau teh.

In *Teror*, "Alimin", relieved that "Susy" is showing signs of having re-discovered her emotions and feelings, 'drew a deep breath and shut his eyes. He was so grateful. When, ready to open up a discussion with her, he opened his eyes and turned to Lina [Susy], he screamed. Lina [Susy] had cut off one of her fingers and presented it to him without a trace of emotion.'[1] (T, 55)

For Kropos in *Byar pet*, the entire city of Jakarta is a *tontonan*. He is transfixed by the rhythm of the city (*irama hidup yang cepat*), by the sheer size of the streets (*jalanan penuh dan panjang sekali*), by the unimaginable dimensions of the buildings (*besar, tinggi, bentuknya di luar khayalan*), by their endless sparkling windows (*ribuan jendela kaca bergemerlapan*), by the white lines on the side of the road (*garis-garis putih di sepanjang jalan*), by the electricity poles, the parks, the water (*tiang listrik, taman, air*). (BP, 32) It doesn't take him long, however, to realise that the tables have turned and he has become the tontonan:

> Some of the people couldn't suppress their laughter when they looked at me. What must I look like to them? Like a crook?... Like some hardened criminal just dragged from his hiding place?[2] (BP, 33)

In *Kroco*, on one of the many occasions when Warno decides to chop down the trees because they are telling him things he doesn't want to hear, he flies into a frenzy in his search for an axe:

> 'An axe, where's an axe, I need to borrow an axe!' he screamed, like a madman...he went rushing all over the place in his search for an axe.
> Finally he went into a restaurant.
> 'An axe, where's an axe, I need to borrow one!'
> Warno raced into the kitchen and grabbed an axe.'[3]

But the tone of urgency, of impending disaster, is undermined in the next sentence:

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[1] menarik nafas lega dan memejamkan matanya. Ia bersyukur. Ketika ia membuka mata dan menoleh Lina untuk memulai diskusi, ia terpekik. Lina memotong salah satu jarinya dan mengulurkan padanya dengan sama sekali tanpa perasaan.

[2] Ada yang cekakak-cekikik melirik saya. Bagaimana sebetulnya tampang saya? Apa seperti bandit....Seperti bromocorah baru dicudik dari sarangnya.

[3] 'Kapak, mana kapak, pinjam kapaknya' teriaknya seperti orang gila. Ia...berlari ke sana mari mencari-cari kapak. Akhirnya ia masuk ke dalam restoran.
'Kapak, mana kapak, pinjam!
Warno lari ke dapur restoran itu dan mengambil kapak.

> But he made a mistake; he grabbed a leg of pork instead.[1] (K, 33)

Sobat ends with the graphic image of Aji, unable to reconcile himself to the loss of his friendship with Isak, climbing an electricity pole and electrocuting himself:

> Summoning all his strength, he continued to climb, then threw himself onto the cable. The cables shook under the weight of his body. Aji writhed in pain. But he didn't cry out. Then his body went rigid and became trapped in the gaps between the cables, which were still shaking.[2] (S, 114)

Meanwhile, his family, idly wondering why he is late home, is consoled by his wife's throwaway line:

> 'This is par for the course. He's rather self-absorbed at the moment.'[3] (S, 114)

A well-known, although now rarely performed, form of spectacle (in East Java) is the folk theatre known as *ludruk*. This is improvised spoken drama based on contemporary subject matter, usually conveying a picture of the sort of world inhabited by the *wong cilik,* the common people - a world dominated by money problems, overbearing wives, unfaithful husbands and interfering parents-in-law. The spectacle of *ludruk*, however, is not conveyed through realistic satire but through a bizarre type of fantasy, usually involving hilarious skits by clown characters. The audience can laugh at the characters on stage, even if they are facing hardships and injustices. Like *ludruk*, Wijaya's novels dispense with realism and are populated by picaresque-like protagonists. While the characters are almost always in some sort of emotional conflict or pain, the reader can laugh because realism has been suspended, because notions of tragedy, comedy and farce are transcended.

Unlike *ludruk*, however, which is underpinned by a set of moral guidelines for the audience to follow in everyday situations, Wijaya's novels do not provide solace, reassurance or comfort for the reader. Wijaya's express purpose, as

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[1] Tapi ia keliru, yang diambilnya adalah paha babi.

[2] Dengan sekuat tenaga ia naik dan melemparkan tubuhnya ke atas kawat. Kawat-kawat itu bergetar menerima tubuhnya. Aji menggeliat kesakitan. Tapi, ia tidak menjerit. Kemudian tubuhnya kaku di sela-sela rentangan kawat listrik yang masih terus bergoyang-goyang.

[3] Biasa. Ia sedang asyik dengan dirinya sendiri.

demonstrated above, is to "terrorise" his readers. No cure is suggested for the metaphysical anguish of the human condition: the protagonists of these stories commit suicide, give birth to hermaphrodites, become invisible and continue an endless search for self-identity.

The reason for the metaphysical anguish of mankind is suggested in Wijaya's description of his target audience, quoted above. Most people are asleep, in a stupor, closed off to change, trapped in a slave mentality. Although he does it in a mediated form, Wijaya poses serious questions about "normality" and uniformity. Like Mangunwijaya, he is concerned with the effect on the individual of a hegemony which demands conformity of thought, behaviour and opinion, but unlike Mangunwijaya, he does not contextualise this concern in Indonesian history. Like Mangunwijaya, Wijaya forces his readers to view "reality" from a different perspective, but he does not pin that "reality" to a specific place or time. Mangunwijaya creates heroes in his novels, heroes whose role is to reinterpret conventional versions of Indonesian history. 'Mental terror does not require heroes'[1] (Wijaya 1995a, 48), and Wijaya's novels are populated by anti-heroes whose warped emotions, plastic hearts and bizarre behaviour can be understood as a response to societal pressure to conform.

In Wijaya's novel *Perang* the concern with the tyranny of order and the exercise of power is more clearly contextualised within the Hindu-Javanese tradition, through a satirical questioning of some of the time-honoured "truths" of the *Mahabharata*.

Perang - questioning the status quo

> We cannot dispose our future; we are but wooden dolls, moved by strings. (*The Mahabharata*)[2]

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[1] Teror mental tidak memerlukan hero.

[2] William Buck *Mahabharata*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 250

Unlike Mangunwijaya, who asks his readers to look to the *wayang* as a guide for explaining the motives and behaviour of his protagonist, in *Perang* Wijaya attempts to deconstruct some of the time-honoured "truths" of the *wayang* stories.[1] These stories provide him with a vehicle for satirising, in a mediated way, the political ideology of contemporary Indonesia.

In much the way as Shakespearian plays are increasingly being "made over" to suit the tastes of twentieth century audiences, the *wayang* characters in *Perang* are computer-literate, wear jeans and punk hairstyles and read *The New York Times*. Superficially the novel is an amusing contemporary adaptation of some of the "eternal verities" of the *Mahabharata*. In the adaptation process, however, the premises of some of those verities are questioned. In particular, the novel attempts to unsettle the rigidly hierarchical social order which is a feature of the *wayang*, and a cornerstone of New Order political hegemony in Indonesia. The inevitability of the *Bharatayudha*, the Great War of the *Mahabharata*, is also questioned. This may be read as a critique of the fatalistic world view which informs the thinking of many Javanese, the notion that 'we cannot dispose our future'. The novel is also an essay on the nature and exercise of power.

Unsettling the social order

The dramatic tension of the *Mahabharata* rests on the conviction that the Pandawas are the upholders of moral right and their cousins, the Korawas, are of inferior moral rectitude, although not unequivocally evil (that characteristic belongs to the ogres[2]). Essentially, the Korawas are inferior because they indulge their personal passions. Battles between the two factions may be fierce, bloody and sometimes tantalisingly close, but the outcome is assured - victory for the Pandawas. As Bima puts it in *Perang* (277):

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[1] As Sears points out (1996, 31n), 'there are no versions, tellings or even spellings of Mahabharata and Ramayana tales that are more correct than others.' She quotes from the Indian scholar Ramanujan who wrote, 'In a sense, no text is original, yet no telling is a mere retelling - and the story has no closure, although it may be enclosed in a text.' (1996, 1)

[2] See Brandon 1970, 19-20

> The Korawas will lose in the *Bharatayudha* because they have to lose.[1]

Furthermore, the hierarchical social order of the *wayang* provides for each rank a particular social function, which cannot be transcended. For example, the *brahmana* are the priests and the *satrya* are the knights and each is accorded a code of appropriate behaviour befitting their role in the hierarchy.

Both these pillars of the *wayang* social structure - the Pandawa-Korawa binary and the immutability of social function - are challenged in *Perang*.

It is the oldest Pandawa brother Yudhistira who first questions the "truth" that the Korawa clan are inevitably in the wrong and always and irrevocably the enemy:

> Is the encroaching by the Korawas on the border really the most important problem? Is that the real reason that our people in the interior are suffering? Could it perhaps be because of their own negligence? If they'd been careful, their fish wouldn't have been poached, their animals wouldn't have been killed, their territory wouldn't have been invaded.[2] (P, 21)

In order to test Yudhistira's suggestion that the Korawas aren't necessarily all bad, the *punakawan* (clown) Petruk disguises himself and slips into the kingdom of Astina to see if the Korawas are in fact 'an evil power that wants only to annex the truth'.[3] (P, 43) His conclusion at the end of his adventure is that the kingdom of Astina is exactly the same as Amarta: Suyudana, the leader of the Korawas, compares favourably with Yudhistira, and Dorna, the Korawa advisor, who had always been depicted as epitomising the very worst characteristics of the Korawas, in Petruk's eyes exudes an aura of intelligence and shrewdness.[4] The only difference

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[1] Korawa kalah di dalam Perang Bharatayudha itu karena mereka harus kalah.

[2] Apa benar soal masuknya Korawa ke perbatasan itu masalah yang paling penting. Apa benar itu yang telah menyebabkan rakyat kita di pedalaman kelaparan. Apa bukan karena kekuranghati-hatian mereka sendiri. Kalau mereka hati-hati, tak akan mungkin ikan dicuri, binatang dibunuh apalagi wilayah dimasuki.

[3] kekuatan jahat yang ingin mencaplok kebenaran

[4] Anderson (1965, 24) says ‘in the traditional view, all the main characters, except perhaps Dorna, are held in high honour.’ Keeler (1989, 155) comments that Dorna is vainglorious, conceited and a liar; in short ‘he represents all that is reprehensible in a teacher’

between the Amartans and the Astinans, he concludes, is that 'we were born here and they were born there.'[1] (P, 60) Later Kresna himself infiltrates Astina in disguise and, like Petruk, remarks that 'basically they are the same as the Amartans, unassuming and peace-loving, not at all inclined to aggression'.[2] (P, 127)

Assured of their victory in the *Bharatayudha*, the Pandawas in *Perang* have sunk into self-satisfaction and indolence. Kresna despairs of their complacency:

> Just because they know they're going to win in the *Bharatayudha* War, they happily leave everything to fate. They've forgotten their own people. Extravagance has become a way of life.[3] (P, 111-12)

Among the gods, too, there is regret at having told the Pandawas that they would win:

> I said before, didn't I, that there was no need for us to tell them that they would win. This is an inevitable result of them knowing the outcome. Getting tabs on themselves and carrying on as they please. Nothing matters to them.[4] (P, 148)

In *Perang* both the knights and the *punakawan* attempt to reinvent themselves and to transcend their respective social statuses in the *gara-gara* scene, popularly referred to as the clown scene.[5] In *Perang* the *gara-gara* scene is set in Semar's village of Karang Tumaritis, where a visiting international photojournalist has been critical of the cyclical nature of the *wayang* plays. The *punakawan* and the five Pandawa brothers then begin to explore the possibility of changing key elements of the plays. Semar's sons Gareng, Petruk and Bagong adopt an eclectic cowboy-punk dress style, Bima arrives at a formal assembly with a punk hair-do and Arjuna grows sideburns. These physical changes seem in fact to be manifestations of more

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[1] ...kita lahir di sini, dan mereka lahir di situ.

[2] Pada dasarnya mereka sama saja dengan orang-orang Amarta, sederhana dan ingin damai, sehingga sulit menjadi agresor

[3] Mentang-mentang tahu akan menang di dalam Perang Bharatayudha, malah enak-enakan menyerahkan semuanya pada takdir. Rakyat mulai dilupakan. Kemewahan dipupuk jadi gaya hidup.

[4] Aku kan sudah bilang dulu, tak usah kasih tahu mereka bahwa mereka yang akan menang. Kalau tahu menang ya begini jadinya. Merasa diri berkuasa lalu seenaknya saja. Semua dianggap enteng.

[5] For a description of the general pattern of the *gara-gara* see Brandon 1970, 24

profound transformations. The assembly begins discussing controversial issues such as selling off land to the ogres and decriminalising opium, resulting in a "cultural revolution" of sorts. When Yudhistira orders a culling of the ogres Bima uncharacteristically urges caution, discussion and negotiation with the ogres. Arjuna takes a stand against polygamy and supports family planning, Bima takes up callisthenics, Yudhistira starts mixing with the hoi polloi, and Semar becomes the womaniser, marrying three women in two months. The gods begin to worry; the capital has become a metropolis while in the villages farmers are dying of hunger, and violence and crime are breaking out everywhere. Like Nero, however, in the midst of this disorder, the Pandawa brothers are revelling in their new lifestyle. In short, 'virtually the whole narrative has been subverted'.[1] (P, 284) Fortunately, the Pandawas come to their senses, gradually revert to their usual demeanour and 'everything is normal again' (*semuanya kembali normal*, P, 287).

However, Semar's sons periodically continue this process of self-reinvention. Petruk is depressed because he has never been given the chance to be a *satrya*. He is sick of being the jester, a role that carries little kudos with it. Bagong, too, decides he wants to be a leader, like Yudhistira, and sets about trying to emulate the altruism of his idol. Gareng decides that he wants to be a poet; he plagiarises some of Yudhistira's poems and gets them published in *Horison.* Finally Semar is forced to remind his sons of the role of the *punakawan*:

> A good punakawan must be empty, always empty, in order to provide your boss with the opportunity to fill you up. Remember you are a *punakawan*, not a king. A professional *punakawan*![2] (P, 321)

(According to legend the main *wayang kulit* clowns, Semar and Togog, were originally gods, brothers of Batara Guru. Because of their bad conduct they were banished from heaven to live among mortals - Semar and his three sons, Petruk, Gareng, and Bagong, becoming servants of the Pandawas, princes of the Kingdom of

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[1] Praktis seluruh pakem berubah total

[2] Punakawan yang baik, harus kosong, senantiasa kosong, untuk memberikan kesempatan majikanmu menuangkan isinya. Ingat kamu punakawan bukan raja. Punakawan yang profesional!

Amarta. Semar still retains some of the privileges of his former status as a god. When one of the gods visits the Pandawas, for example, all of the princely heroes assume positions of respect, so that their heads are lower than his, and address him in the highest level of language and are answered by him in low Javanese. Semar by contrast remains standing and speaks to the gods in low Javanese, and is answered in high Javanese. {Peacock 1968, 51})

At the same time, too, Yudhistira is reminding himself that he is not meant to be a poet either: 'I'm the sovereign. A professional sovereign'[1] (P, 321), he says, throwing his poems into the rubbish bin.

These challenges to the established order of the *wayang* merely serve to highlight the futility of non-conformism. Those who defy convention must be put back into their proper place, or face ostracism. Knights are knights and clowns are clowns. The Pandawas are morally superior to the Korawas. As the god Batara Indra declares:

> The Pandawas must remain pure as a symbol of the truth! And the Korawas are exactly the opposite. This is quite unambiguous![2] (P, 181)

Attempts to transcend one's allotted status may provide a temporary and amusing diversion, but they are never truly transformative.

In *Perang* the ogres also question their role in the scheme of things. The baby ogres cannot understand why they always lose the battles despite their superior size and fangs. Dissatisfied with their parents' reply, that earth belongs to mankind, the young ones decide not to just accept their fate, but to go and annihilate the humans themselves. Eventually they come to the conclusion that they get beaten all the time because, after years of not being used, their brains have shrunk to the size of a chilli seed. After fifty more years they learn to think again, and start to win battles, and as their brains grow, their bodies shrink and they resemble human beings

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[1] aku prabu. Seorang prabu yang profesional!

[2] Pandawa harus tetap murni sebagai lambang kebenaran! Dan Korawa kebalikannya. Ini namanya tegas dan positif!

more and more. Soon mankind is under threat from the ogres. This results in a backlash, and a witch hunt of anyone suspected to have ogre origins. They are forced back into the jungle where the old ogres remind the young ones, 'You can't change the course of fate.'[1] (P, 357) The audience is happy because 'the truth has won. Mankind is still triumphant'.[2] (P, 360)

In the *wayang* the ogres, stupid, clumsy, evil and unspeakably ugly, originate from *sabrangan*, literally 'over there', a place which is neither Amarta nor Astina.[3] Their superiority in size, strength and numbers means that they pose a constant potential threat to the citizens of both kingdoms, and must be kept at bay through regular culling - a task usually undertaken with relish by Bima, the second of the five Pandawa brothers, who is known for his extraordinary strength as a fighter.

The ogres are a source of potent symbolism. They represent the enemy, and all regimes need an enemy, as Semar explains to Bima:

> The enemy serves many functions. He is a tool for fine-tuning our minds and bodies, so that we are ever-ready, ever-alert and ever-mindful. He trains us to win. He hones our thoughts so we don't become neglectful, stagnant or careless. We should tend to the enemy in the same way as we tend a garden, so that we are always occupied, so that we don't become tired of waiting. Like a garden, the enemy provides a focus where we can channel our energies during times of recreation.[4] (P,7)

For the rulers of contemporary Indonesia, the "enemy" is the latent threat of communism, a threat which has been frequently invoked by the government in its attempts to curb dissidence. While the PKI is officially banned in Indonesia, it is seen as a constant lurking menace, which must be kept at bay through eternal vigilance and immediate crackdowns on individuals and activities perceived as subversive. The fate of the ogres in *Perang* may be read as a metaphor for that of

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[1] Kamu tidak bisa mengubah takdir

[2] Kebenaran tetap menang. Manusia terus berjaya.

[3] Anderson (1972, 29) defines Sabrang in the Javanese context as ‘an undifferentiated word meaning “overseas” but essentially applied to all non-Javanese groups and political entities’

[4] Banyak gunanya. Alat untuk pendidikan jiwa-raga. Kita jadi siap, awas dan mawas diri selalu. Untuk melatih kita menang. Untuk mengasah pikiran kita sehingga tidak alpa, tidak macet, tidak ceroboh. Musuh itu harus kita pelihara seperti kebun di belakang rumah kita, yang membuat kita sibuk, sehingga tidak kesal menunggu, tempat kita menyalurkan tenaga waktu senggang.

the Communists in Indonesia. Everybody knows they are there, although they are rarely seen. Even though regular culling is necessary, it is important, as Semar demonstrates above, to know that they are "out there": everyone needs an enemy (or a scapegoat) for target practice. The fate of the ogres in trying to re-invent themselves, to make their presence felt and to become fully-fledged citizens may be read as a metaphor for the rise and eventual dramatic fall of the PKI in Indonesia. During the Soekarno regime the PKI achieved political legitimacy, just as the ogres in *Perang* are gradually afforded a semblance of credibility in human society. When Soekarno's efforts to juggle the interests of the PKI and the army began to falter, however, and an attempt was made to overthrow him, an enemy, or scapegoat, was once again needed. The alleged PKI involvement in the coup was seized upon and the aborted putsch was officially constructed as a "Communist coup". The PKI were relegated to their function as "enemy", legitimising the witch-hunt and massive slaughter which followed. In *Perang*, once the ogres begin to get ideas beyond their station, they too must be kept in check, and their slaughter ensures that the status quo is preserved and that the "truth" is victorious.

The Bharatayudha must not fail. The civil war must break out.[1]

As the title of the novel suggests, if there is a "master narrative" in this novel, it revolves around speculation about the inevitability or otherwise of the *Bharatayudha* war, the apocalyptic Great War in the *Mahabharata* which the Pandawas are foreordained to win, but which causes devastation on both sides.[2] In the *Mahabharata*, the *Bharatayudha* is inevitable - it will happen and nothing can postpone it when the time has come, and the Pandawas are foreordained to win. This novel, however, highlights the significant role played by Kresna[3] in manipulating the circumstances of the war. As Semar reflects, the predicted victory of the Pandawas

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[1] Bharatayudha tidak boleh gagal. Perang saudara, harus meletus. (P, 233)

[2] The Bharatayudha *lakon*s are in fact rarely performed as they are considered dangerous and likely to bring about misfortune to the sponsors of the performance.

[3] the Javanese spelling of the Indian Krishna

in fact has nothing to do with their efforts, nothing to do with their own character qualities, but is merely because 'that's what Kresna wants, that's the way the *pakem* has been written'.[1] (P, 247) There are suggestions in *Perang*, however, that perhaps the *pakem* is negotiable.

Kresna, cousin and adviser to the Pandawas and an incarnation of Vishnu, is arguably the most powerful figure in the *Mahabharata*. However, although intellectually brilliant, he is a 'conscienceless liar and unscrupulous schemer who never hesitates to break the rules when he feels it necessary.' (Anderson 1965, 14) Nonetheless, according to the *Mahabharata*, 'there is truth where Krishna is, and there is victory where truth is' and 'he is the soul of all creatures, and though the eye be open, it will not see without him.' Kresna plays the role of puppet master and he has the power to determine the future of the world. Maya, the architect of the olden gods in the *Mahabharata*, says to Kresna, 'It is true, then, that nothing living can even blink its eye without you.' Dursasana, the Korawa king, says of him, 'Krishna has heard so often that he is something special that now he believes it himself.' (Buck 1973, 243)

Kresna possesses absolute power: he has been given a mandate by the gods allowing him to do whatever is necessary to 'arrange the implementation of the *Bharatayudha* War as decreed by the heavens.'[2] (P, 123) But in *Perang* the potential arbitrariness of power is first exposed when it transpires that the letter of mandate is in fact a blank piece of paper, open to many interpretations. Baladewa interprets it as giving Kresna the power to behave like a tyrant, whereas Kresna himself can simply claim that he has been entrusted with the responsibility of 'monitoring the implementation of the plan of the gods, which they have been putting together in a just and mature way for many years.'[3] (P, 123) As Sears points out (1996, 296), in

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[1] kehendak Sri Kresna, karena pakem sudah ditulis seperti itu
The *pakem* (fixed text) refers to the written-down stories on which the *wayang* plays are based. The *pakem* contains outlines of the stories, not play scripts. The *lakon* texts record the stories in detail. See Sears 1996, 175-6; 189

[2] mengatur terlaksananya Perang Bharatayudha sebagaimana dicita-citakan kayangan

[3] menjaga kelangsungan rencana para dewa yang sudah disusun dengan matang serta adil selama bertahun-tahun

Perang Wijaya dares to question the fact that Kresna is allowed to violate the *satrya* code on account of his divine origins.

When the kingdom of Amarta is hit by an earthquake, the Korawa's war chief Sengkuni sends in the troops, ostensibly to help with repairs. Inevitably, however, fighting breaks out at the border (even though 'the *Bharatayudha* is still a long way off' *Bharatayudha masih lama*, P, 115). Although Dorna is blamed for trying to precipitate the *Bharatayudha* (P, 135), it is in fact he who tells his son Aswatama, 'They are not our enemies. They are our flesh and blood.'[1] (P, 140) Much deliberation goes on in the Realm of the Gods concerning who was to blame for attempting to bring forward the *Bharatayudha* war and eventually the gods blame Kresna for the subversion of the plot, for attempting to undermine the *pakem*. They call Kresna to demand of him, 'Why has this incident been allowed to happen, when it was not in the scenario we created?'[2] (P, 176) However, a tumultuous noise from the earth below suddenly alerts them to the fact that the two factions are having a huge party at the border. Batara Narada can only shake his head and say, 'I'm sorry. This is not part of the plan at all.'[3] (P, 184) Eventually, despite the tantalising suggestions that the *Bharatayudha* may be brought forward, or that it may not happen, or that the warring cousins will be reconciled, the status quo is maintained:

> The *Bharatayudha* must not fail. The civil war must break out.

The fact that this prediction, generated by Kresna's computer, appears to be due to the fact that mice pressed the wrong keys on the computer while Kresna was asleep is irrelevant; the outcome is that the correct order of things has been maintained and the gods can breathe a sigh of relief.

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[1] Itu bukan musuh. Itu darah kita semua.

[2] Mengapa peristiwa itu sampai terjadi, padahal tidak ada dalam skenario yang kita buat?

[3] Maaf. Ini di luar rencana semua.

Order in contemporary Indonesia

Order was the highest priority of Suharto's New Order government; without it, it was feared that the goals of development and stability would be jeopardised. In *Perang* order is restored by the random touch of mice paws; in contemporary Indonesia the means to the end frequently often still appears equally arbitrary. Public disturbances are quelled by an often heavy-handed show of military strength, but the end justifies the means. As Semar reflects in *Perang* (240), 'harmony is the most important thing in life, even though it is frequently irrational'.[1]

The role of Kresna in constructing the "truth", in determining people's lives - often using deceit, trickery and disguise - can be read as a metaphor for the way in which political hegemonies construct reality for their constituents. As the discussion in previous chapters has demonstrated, political regimes in Indonesia have consistently imposed a hegemonic version of history upon the citizens of Indonesia. These versions of history are given legitimacy by dint of the power of the ruler; they then become "the truth": Diponegoro was a national hero. The Revolution was won through the united efforts of the Indonesian people. The PKI masterminded the attempted coup in 1965. The Communists are responsible for outbreaks of civil unrest in Indonesia.

Once they become constituted as "truths", the role of the political hegemony in constructing them is forgotten. The conniving role of Kresna in masterminding the *Bharatayudha* in *Perang* serves to foreground the often arbitrary way in which reality is constructed, not only in Indonesia but by the forces of power everywhere.

The exercise of power

Kresna's unquestioned role as mastermind of the *Bharatayudha* is predicated upon Javanese notions of power. In questioning Kresna's conduct and use

[1] harmoni adalah yang paling utama dalam kehidupan, kendati sering tidak rasional

of power, Wijaya is also questioning some of the premises about power which are fundamental to the Javanese tradition and in particular to the *wayang*.

In *wayang* mythology, power is a gift which is bestowed upon an individual by divine intervention. Power exists independently of the person who is wielding it; it is concrete. Furthermore, notions of "illegitimate" power are irrelevant; power has nothing to do with morality. (Anderson 1972, 7-8)

In *Perang* power is exposed as something that is 'created' (*diciptakan*), not something that is 'natural' (*alamiah*). (P, 31) It is thus able to be manipulated:

> If we have in fact held power improperly, if it is true that power increases the suffering of the people, what is the use of it? If power is not in fact the outcome of mutual agreement among us, let's give it back to the people. We'll start again and try to live without being controlled by power.[1] (P,100)

Power is also exposed as being heterogeneous. It derives from various sources: Kresna relies on his computer to help him predict the exact date of the outbreak of the *Bharatayudha*. Power is also arbitrary: Kresna is given *carte blanche* to do what is necessary for the carrying out of the war but in the end it is the mice who predict the date of the *Bharatayudha*.

According to traditional Javanese notions, power is 'without inherent moral implications as such'. (Anderson 1972, 8) In *Perang*, however, Kresna engages in underhand tactics to mislead both factions. In particular he plays upon the gullibility of the three *punakawan* brothers and even incites Gareng to agitate for Amarta to change from a kingdom to a republic with a democratically elected leader. (P,104)

Wayang as subversion

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[1] Kalau betul kekuasaan itu sudah kita miliki dengan tak layak, kalau betul kekuasaan itu yang menyebabkan manusia lebih banyak menderita, buat apa ada kekuasaan? Kalau betul kekuasaan itu bukan persetujuan kita bersama, kita kembalikan lagi kepada setiap orang. Kita mulai lagi dari permulaan dan mencoba hidup tanpa diatur oleh kekuasaan.

Written at the time of the *sastra kontekstual* debates about the role of literature, *Perang* also suggests a subversive role for the *wayang*. The repeated attempts by the characters in the novel to subvert the *pakem* are capped by a riotous ending where the *dalang* can no longer control the play he is supposed to be manipulating. The novel culminates with the scene in the *Bharatayudha* where Bima kills Duryudana. Bima, Kresna, the *dalang* and even the audience (at Taman Ismail Marzuki) engage in behaviour which seriously transgresses that set down by the *pakem*. Kresna tells Bima to cheat by striking Duryudana on the thigh with his club, an illegal move. Bima, however, has forgotten to bring his club, and the *dalang* is left orchestrating an inconclusive battle which leaves him powerless to return the events to the *pakem*. The audience starts up a chant at Bima to kill Duryudana. The *dalang*, no longer in control of his characters, offers Bima an alternative weapon but he refuses it. Finally the audience attacks the *dalang*, prompting the director of TIM to threaten to call the police.[1] However, the uproar subsides after a personal appearance from Danarto, who applauds the audience performance as the best thing to ever happen at TIM. Future performances frequently see Bima forgetting his club, Arjuna forgetting his arrow, and often the *dalang* is attacked by the audience before he has even uttered a word. Eventually, however, the *wayang* is banned unless there can be a guarantee that Bima won't forget his club, and that the play will not go against the *pakem*. Such a threat is familiar to theatre audiences and the reading public in Indonesia. Dissident voices, voices which do not fit with the *pakem* of the regime, have been periodically quelled through censorship and bans.

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[1] Mulyono says (1979, 133), 'If there were a *dalang* who dared to transgress the norms of his craft and to change a plot set down by his sponsor, he would be punished; he would be abused by the audience and most likely would not get invited to perform plays in the future.'
(Kalau sekiranya ada dalang berani...keluar dari norma-norma pedalangan dan berani mengubah lakon yang telah ditetapkan oleh yang kuasa menanggap wayang, pasti dalang itu akan mendapat hukuman, yaitu dicaci maki oleh para penonton, dan kemungkinan besar tidak akan ada orang yang menanggapnya lagi.)

The challenge of Putu Wijaya: 'My writing is not difficult, if you know how to read it.':[1]

This comment by Wijaya both hints at an awareness on his part that some readers find his novels difficult, and challenges those readers to come up with the appropriate interpretive strategies for tackling those novels. He goes on to suggest that if he were to read from his work to a relatively uneducated audience, they would have no trouble understanding it:

> My writing deals with social problems and the ordinary problems of ordinary people...You don't need any reference books when you're reading my work. I talk about us, the Indonesian people as we actually are.[2] (Wijaya, 1987a, 2)

While his writing is patently not in the social realist mould, it is clearly not escapist fantasy. The purpose of his novels is elusive, couched as it is in fantasy, but his writing is disturbing and unsettling. As Rafferty suggests (1990, 104), 'Putu's literary style alternately encourages and frustrates the adoption of a realistic interpretation.

Putu Wijaya's place in the literary debates of the period under consideration is somewhat ambiguous. His novels present a challenge to both literary critics accustomed to analysing a work by reference to form, plot and characterisation and to socially committed writers such as those from the *sastra kontekstual* movement who regarded the anti-real as a device for shirking the responsibility of taking a stand on important social issues. Wijaya himself (1982b) sees literature as ideally having 'universal' appeal; it should be accessible to 'people of all eras, of all classes, of all beliefs, of all types, of high character and low.[3]

Towards different concretisations of the texts

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[1] Karangan saya tidak sulit, kalau tahu cara membacanya. (Wijaya n.d., 2)

[2] Ruang gerak karangan saya adalah masalah sosial dan masyarakat kita, manusia Indonesia yang ada dalam kenyataan.

[3] manusia segala zaman, manusia segala tingkatan, manusia dari segala paham, dari segala jenis manusia, yang luhur maupun yang bejat.

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Y.B. Mangunwijaya and Putu Wijaya are clearly situated at markedly different points on the Indonesian literary spectrum. Wijaya shuns the carefully crafted historical narrative employed by Pramoedya in favour of an anti-real discourse rich in tropes and "shock tactics". Pramoedya, for whom the *wayang* stories represent an 'intoxicating veil that mystifies the Javanese' (Sears 1996, 10), is not part of the trend towards neo-regionalism which informs the work of both Wijaya and Mangunwijaya. Mangunwijaya finds in the *wayang* a rich source of allegories and metaphors for the development of his protagonists, while Wijaya exposes the "truths" of the *wayang* as ideological constructs. Pramoedya and Mangunwijaya have clearly sought to construct the idea of "Indonesia" in their work; 'Indonesia' exists in Wijaya's work but it is in a highly mediated state.

Yet the novels of these three ostensibly markedly different writers have in common the issuing of a challenge to their readers. Read within the Indonesian socio-historical context, Pramoedya's novels challenge the reader to understand contemporary Indonesia as a product of the past. Mangunwijaya's novels challenge some of the commonly-held assumptions about the Indonesian revolution and the premises on which Indonesian nationalism has been defined. Wijaya's novels challenge the culture of conformism and order which has been the basis of the political hegemony in New Order Indonesia.

While these challenges are specifically tied to the Indonesian context, they also speak to more global questions. If those global questions are brought to bear upon them, other aspects of the texts come to the fore, while the more "contextual" Indonesian issues recede into the background. By reading them from a postmodernist and/or a post-colonial perspective, I aim to show that, to gloss Belsey, other possible positions of intelligibility can be released. This is my project in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

POSTMODERNIST READINGS

From modernism to postmodernism

Postmodernism had its genesis in modernism which in literature developed as a reaction against nineteenth century realism. Literary and artistic modernist movements were influenced by Freudian and Jungian psychology, and by anthropologist Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890). Art and literature both emphasised the role of the unconscious mind, the significance of the irrational and the intuitive, and the use of myth. Literary modernists often replaced traditional narrative modes (chronological plots, continuous narratives, omniscient narrators and closed endings) with stream of consciousness and experimentation with form. Internal experience was privileged over outward "reality", and conventional notions of chronology and causality were frequently subverted.

Modernism in all fields of the arts reached hegemonic status in the mid-twentieth century. This was signified by "classic" works of high modernism such as Joyce's *Ulysses,* Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Pollock's abstract expressionist paintings, films by Hitchcock, Bergman, Fellini and Kurasawa, the architectural styles of Le Corbusier, Wright and Mies and music by Stravinsky, Schonberg and Webern.[1] Among the markers of literary high modernism were an emphasis on impressionism ("how" we see rather than "what" we see), a breaking down of the

[1] My thanks to Thomas Hunter for these musical suggestions.

distinction between genres, and reflexivity within given works. It was in this context that anti-modernist and countercultural movements, bearing the seeds of postmodernism, began to spring up in the 1960s.

While postmodernism is generally conceptualised as a reaction against the institutionalisation of high modernism - its shift from being oppositional to being hegemonic and its assimilation into the university, the museum, the art gallery and the literary "canon" - postmodern culture displays what Jameson (1984b, 373) calls an 'irreducible variety' of styles, forms and products.

Although postmodernist narratives tend to share features such as the abandonment of linear narrative, the repudiation of representation and the renunciation of traditional "story"telling, the heterogeneity of literary works included in the category "postmodern" nonetheless problematises efforts to establish "family resemblances" between them. That postmodernist literature means different things to different people is evident from the use of the term by, among others, Barth, who understands postmodernism as 'the literature of replenishment', Lyotard, who conceives of postmodernism as 'a general condition of knowledge in the contemporary informational regime' and Hassan, who views postmodernism as 'a stage on the road to the spiritual unification of mankind'.[1]

Some critics maintain that the notion of a break between modernism and postmodernism is an artificial one, and that what is commonly referred to as "postmodern" is in fact merely an organic stage of modernism, an intensification of the modernist tendency towards innovation. Brooke-Rose for example claims that "postmodernism" is simply 'moderner modern', prompting McHale (1987, 4) to ask parenthetically whether the "post-modern" should actually be termed "most-modern". Kermode, in his seminal writings about modernism, prefers the term 'neo-modernism'; he sees postmodernism as simply a later generation of modernism. (Kermode 1968, 27) "Postmodernism" is thus seen in some quarters as a part of the high modernist tradition against which it purportedly reacted. Lyotard (1984, 79)

[1] See Barth 1980; Newman 1984; Lyotard 1984; Hassan 1975

envisions postmodernism as heralding the return of a new and reinvigorated form of high modernism. For him, the "post-" in "postmodernism" is in no way to be read as "anti-", which is how it is sometimes constructed. (Wolfe's book on recent architectural debates, *From Bauhaus to our house*, for example, is imbued with what Jameson {1984b, 375} calls a 'passionate hatred of the Modern'.)

Eagleton (1988, 146-7) suggests that postmodernism is an amalgam of elements of modernism and the avant-garde. From modernism it takes the fragmentary self, which is countered with the presentation of bizarre experience resembling some avant-garde practices. With the avant-garde postmodernism shares an opposition to "high culture". Like modernism, it rejects the "political" (as belonging to traditional rationality). Hutcheon (1989, 168) describes postmodernism as being 'politically ambivalent', an ambivalence which Habermas (1983) regards as the 'vice' of postmodernism.

Those critics who would argue that postmodernism is something markedly different from modernism typically establish "catalogues" of postmodernist features which distinguish the genre from both modernism and anti-modernism. Taking as his premise that modernism is characterised by metaphor and anti-modernism by metonymy, Lodge (1977, 220-245) identifies five strategies used in postmodernist writing - namely contradiction, discontinuity, randomness, excess and short circuit - which fall between the poles, so to speak, of metaphor and metonymy. Drawing from diverse disciplines, Hassan's tabular schema of differences between modernism and postmodernism covers a broad range of features:

modernism	*postmodernism*
romanticism/Symbolism	paraphysics/Dadaism
form (conjunctive, closed)	antiform (disjunctive, open)
purpose	play
design	chance
hierarchy	anarchy
mastery/logos	exhaustion/silence
art object/finished work	process/performance/happening
distance	participation
creation/totalization/synthesis	decreation/deconstruction/antithesis
presence	absence
centring	dispersal

genre/boundary	text/intertext
semantics	rhetoric
paradigm	syntagm
hypotaxis	parataxis
metaphor	metonymy
selection	combination
root/depth	rhizome/surface
interpretation/reading	against interpretation/misreading
signified	signifier
lisible (readerly)	scriptible (writerly)
narrative/grande histoire	anti-narrative/petite histoire
master code	idiolect
symptom	desire
type	mutant
genital/phallic	polymorphous/androgynous
paranoia	schizophrenia
origin/cause	difference-difference/trace
God the Father	The Holy Ghost
metaphysics	irony
determinacy	indeterminacy
transcendence	immanence

(Hassan 1985, 123-4)

However, as McHale points out (1987, 7), these oppositions are piecemeal and static. Hassan's chart, for example, enables us to speculate how individual modernist features may be re-interpreted in postmodernism, but does not contribute much to the "big picture" of postmodernist versus modernist poetics. It also begs the question of **why** these features might be clustered together as being "typically" modernist or "typically" postmodernist. Furthermore, these heterogeneous catalogues contribute little to an explanation of the transition from modernism to postmodernism, because they posit postmodernism as necessarily being opposed to modernism rather than being an "outgrowth" of it. This is primarily because in literature postmodernism is much closer to modernism than it is in other areas of cultural practice.

A useful tool for analysing the transition from modernism to postmodernism in literature is Jakobson's notion of 'the dominant', which he defines 'as 'the focusing component of a work of art'. (Jakobson 1971, 108) The dominant 'rules, determines and transforms the remaining components.' The evolution of a

poetic form - from modernism to postmodernism for example - involves a shift in the mutual relationship among the components of the system. This is what Jakobson calls the 'shifting dominant', a notion which McHale (1987, 7) invokes to account for the differences between modernist and postmodernist narratives.

McHale (1987, 9) contends that the common denominator of the modernist code is epistemological: modernist fiction foregrounds questions such as, How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what am I in it? What is there to be known? Who knows it? How do they know it? Modernist texts foreground epistemological themes such as the accessibility of knowledge and the problem of "unknowability". The characteristic epistemological devices of this 'dominant' include the multiplication of perspectives, the use of a single "centre of consciousness" and the interior monologue.

Postmodernism, in McHale's view (1987, 10), marks a shift in dominant from the epistemological to the ontological - that is, from problems of modes of knowing to problems of modes of being - "post-cognitive" questions. Questions foregrounded in postmodernist fiction include: Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it? What kinds of world are there, and how do they differ? The somewhat heterogeneous catalogues of postmodernism discussed above also foreground ontological issues and the "family resemblance" which Jameson was looking for may well be the ontological dominant.

For McHale, then, the shift from modernism to postmodernism is accounted for by the shift from epistemology to ontology: at a certain point epistemological uncertainty becomes ontological plurality. The ontological concern of postmodernist fiction is characterised by instability and uncertainty, the loss of a world that can be accepted as a "given" of experience'. (McHale 1987, 26) This is not to say that postmodernist texts do not raise epistemological issues; epistemology, however, is backgrounded as the price for foregrounding ontology.

McHale (1987, 11) argues that the 'the logic of literary history' brought writers in Europe, America and Latin America to a pedestrian crossing at

much the same time. They were faced with remaining on the modernist epistemological side of the street or crossing over to the postmodernist ontological side. The "change of dominant" can be traced most clearly in the works of writers who, during the course of their career, travelled the "logical" trajectory from modernism to postmodernism - writers such as Beckett, Robbe-Grillet, Fuentes, Nabokov, Coover and Pynchon.

Limit-modernism

Texts which seem to reside on the cusp of modernism and postmodernism are arguably those in which the discourse shifts between posing questions of an epistemological nature and questions of an ontological nature. McHale cites as an example of such a text Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, where in chapter eight the dominant clearly changes from the epistemological to the ontological: the novel's mystery is solved not through deduction and weighing evidence but rather through an imaginative projection of what could have happened.

McHale coins the term 'limit-modernism' to describe those texts in which the focus shifts between the epistemological and the ontological. Such texts alternately represent an epistemological and an ontological perspective and thus cannot be rightly labelled "modernist" or "postmodernist". Beckett's *Malone dies*, for example, raises both epistemological and ontological questions, and the dominant focus of attention depends on how we look at the text. Fuentes' *Change of skin*, while adapting the ontological structure of the fantastic, concludes by "collapsing" into an epistemological structure whereby the fantastic is converted into a subjective delusion. Nabokov's *Pale fire* (the 'paradigmatic' limit-modernist novel in McHale's view {1987, 19}) is a text of 'absolute epistemological uncertainty' (McHale 1987, 18), but at the same time the Kingdom of Zembla where the story takes place flickers in and out of existence, thus foregrounding an ontological focus. These types of novels then are what McHale calls limit-modernist novels - and what Wilde (1981) calls late-modernist novels. As will become evident in the following

discussion, the notion of such a genre is useful when it comes to undertaking a postmodernist reading of the texts under question here - namely *Durga Umayi*, *Sobat*, *Teror*, *Kroco*, *Byar pet* and *Perang*.

In Indonesia challenges to the authoritarianism and cultural ideologies of New Order rule in the late 1980s and 1990s were encoded in artistic practice bearing many of the markers of postmodernist discourse. Examples include a proliferation of installation art (*seni instalasi*), 'dark poetry' (*puisi gelap*)[1], 'anti-Establishment poetry' (*puisi mbeling*) and the 'new visual art movement' (*Gerakan Seni Rupa Baru*, Dewanto 1996, 181).

While "postmodernism" is often perceived as the rejection of the 'exclusivity of insight' (Appiah 1991, 342) of the antecedent practice of modernism, in Indonesia the 'antecedent practice' of postmodernism is not modernism as it is understood in the West, but rather the cult of universalism which had its genesis in the *Polemik Kebudayaan* debates of the 1930s.

A postmodernist type of discourse gave Indonesian artists the chance to free themselves from the constraints of expression imposed upon them by the narrative of universalism. In much the same way as Hassan pits "modernism" against "postmodernism", Heryanto (1994, 80-81) has developed a catalogue of "New Order rhetoric" (with its basis in the universalist tradition) versus postmodernist discourse in Indonesia:

New Order rhetoric:	*Postmodernist discourse*:
'bahasa baku'	'plesetan'
monolithic	plural
universal	local
stability and harmony	hybridity
hierarchy	anarchy
purpose	process
centralization	openness
bureaucracy	participation
obeisance	play

[1] See Clark 1998

As Bodden (1998) points out, postmodernism in practice in Indonesia differs in some respects from postmodernism in the West. In the Jakarta-based (and now defunct) theatre group Teater Sae, for example, the actors sought "self-actualisation" through their performing - by contrast to Western postmodernism, where the individual subject is "dead". Furthermore, the political dissatisfaction and social alienation expressed through every element of its performances (from the language to the uncomfortable seating arrangements) seems to have more in common with the avant-garde than with postmodernism. Although displaying the 'landscape of disjuncture' of postmodernist culture, the themes of the plays suggest an epistemological concern more akin to modernist, rather than postmodernist, practice. (Bodden identifies in 'Biografi Yanti', for example, a concern with 'the difficulty of finding and defining one's individual identity and knowing the meaning of love, sex and marriage') In addition, 'Biografi Yanti', unlike a postmodernist text, displays a certain contextual coherence through the repetitive and coherent activity of some of the actors.

However, the comment by poet Sutardji Calzoum Bachri (the main exponent of "dark poetry") that Indonesian postmodernism has its origins in what he called the 'existentialism plague' of the 1960s (cited in Clark 1998, 8) suggests a tendency towards ontological rather than epistemological concerns: existentialism challenged the dominance of epistemology in philosophy. (Macquarrie 1973, 93) On the other hand, in its concern for human freedom, personal responsibility and the importance of the individual's need to make choices, existentialism clearly affirms the existence of the "unified subject", unlike postmodernism, which rejects such a notion.

In what follows, I argue that the type of postmodernist discourse in the texts under consideration here resembles that described by McHale as 'limit-modernism': a postmodernism which intersects at some points with postmodernist discourse elsewhere but which incorporates some of the "typical" features of modernism. The notion of 'limit-modernism' is useful for explaining the fact that

these texts exhibit both epistemological and ontological concerns: while ontological uncertainty is foregrounded in most of these texts, there is often also an epistemological attempt to explain that uncertainty. At the same time, however, the texts display several of the postmodernist features "catalogued" by Lodge, Hassan and Heryanto - specifically plurality, anti-narrative (apocryphal history and creative anachronism), play (carnivalised narrative) and excess (hypertrophy and lexical exhibitionism). In the following discussion I aim to demonstrate that, given the 'irreducible variety' of postmodernist forms, styles and products, the novels under question can properly be construed as postmodernist texts.

While the concerns of these novels indicate a postmodernist perspective which is akin to McHale's 'limit-modernism', the narrative style of the texts is more "thoroughly" postmodernist. In particular, I argue that *Durga Umayi* and *Perang* can be read from a postmodernist perspective which clearly implies a rejection, a subversion of the 'exclusivity of insight' of what has gone before (in the same way as some postmodernist texts are clearly a rejection of the 'exclusivity of insight' of modernism). These two novels, then, rely for their impact on a knowledge of the discourse which they are rejecting, a discourse with which the novels must engage as well as subvert. To the extent that they deal with epistemological issues rather than ontological ones, they are limit-modernist. However in their use of plurality, carnivalised narrative, lexical exhibitionism and creative anachronism, they exhibit the textual features common to postmodernist literary practice across a range of national literary traditions.

Sobat, *Teror*, *Kroco* and *Byar pet* are examples of postmodernist discourse which foreground questions of ontological uncertainty. There is no rejection here of prior narratives, no prior-existing text which is being subverted. The picaresque-like anti-heroes of these novels epitomise the flux of the postmodern condition. These novels, too, sometimes reside on the cusp of modernism and postmodernism in that they sometimes invoke epistemological questions such as 'How can I interpret this world of which I am a part?'

Durga Umayi and *Perang*

Subversion of the grand narrative

Part of the challenge of a reading postmodernist text lies in the fact that pinning it down to a specific genre is almost impossible. As Fowler says (1982, 259) ,

> The processes of generic recognition are in fact fundamental to the reading process. Often we may not be aware of this. But whenever we approach a work of an unfamiliar genre - new or old - our difficulties return us to fundamentals. No work, however avant-garde, is intelligible without some context of familiar types.

The postmodernist text makes even the 'return to fundamentals' problematic: the familiar genres are there, but in unfamiliar manifestations. The postmodernist text foregrounds the very act of reading by challenging the reader's assumption that s/he knows how to read. *Durga Umayi* presents itself as fiction but is rooted in history; it wears the guise of history but distorts what is familiar in that history; it purports to tell the life-story of Iin yet makes her ageless and elusive. *Perang* presents all the familiar characters of the *Mahabharata*, yet they behave out of character; it suggests the existence of more than one "reality" in the text; it unsettles the reader's conviction that s/he "knows" the *Mahabharata*.

In postmodern culture, says Lyotard (1984, 37), 'the grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation.' Both *Durga Umayi* and *Perang* can be read as a rejection of the exclusivity of insight of great legitimising narratives: *Durga Umayi* is a rejection of the canonised "narrative of nation", and *Perang* is a rejection of the 'valorised epic past' as depicted in the *Mahabharata*, a past defined by 'absolute conclusiveness and closedness'. (Bakhtin 1990, 16) In both texts the *grande histoire* has been replaced by a series of what Lyotard (1984, xxiv) calls 'micronarratives', fragmented narratives that are symptomatic of an 'incredulity towards metanarratives'.

Durga Umayi uses the strategy of apocryphal history to supplement, and sometimes displace, the official version of Indonesian history. Like historical fiction, *Durga Umayi* frequently operates in the "dark areas" of history - the aspects about which official history does not report - but unlike historical fiction it does so in a spirit of parody.

This spirit of parody depends for its effect upon the juxtaposition of the noble with the mundane. The "dark area" in the incident of the abduction of Soekarno and his family to Rengasdengklok by members of the radical youth movement on the eve of the announcement of Independence is the fact that Soekarno's abductors forgot to take any milk for the baby Guntur:

> well you know what men are like the only thing they understand is playing with their sticks the blunt ones of course and they're completely irresponsible about the consequences, and it wouldn't occur to them that sometimes a bottle of milk is important, it's not enough to rely totally on the mother's breast especially not the breasts of priyayi mothers whose number one role in life is not to suckle their babies but to run the country; Tiwi's *pemuda* idol deserved a good box around the ears he might be tough and manly but what would he know about the needs of a tiny creature crying out for the nipple[1] (DU, 33-4)

The night before the declaration of Independence, when everyone else's mind is on *merdeka atau mati* ('freedom or death'), Tiwi's crucial task is to ensure that the bathroom and toilet are clean:

> it was especially important to make sure that the *pemuda* didn't go wandering at will into the toilet which was for the exclusive use of Bung Karno and Bu Fatmawati; there was no need to make special provisions for Bung Hatta because he always kept to a strict routine, not only did he arrive precisely 5 minutes before a function was due to begin, but he also went to the toilet precisely 5 minutes before getting into the car to attend a meeting or other official function; not like Bung Karno who God have mercy would sometimes piss against the

[1] maklumlah lelaki tahu ya cuma main tongkat saja dengan tongkat tumpul mereka yang tidak pernah tahu tanggung jawab apa akibatnya, dan tidak mudeng bahwa kadang-kadang susu botol itu penting, jangan cuma mengandalkan susu ibu apalagi susu kaum priayi tinggi yang maklumlah memang bukan nomor satu bertugas menyusui bayi tetapi memimpin bangsa; sungguh harus dihajar itu pemuda pujaan si Tiwi yang memang seram dan jantan tetapi apa tahunya tentang manusia mungil yang menangis minta diteteki

> side fence or a tree in the yard, can you believe a great leader would indulge in such behaviour[1] (DU 34-5)

The Proclamation of Independence is suggestively deconstructed. The narrator suggests that, instead of beginning, 'We, the Indonesian people, hereby declare the independence of Indonesia',[2] it should have begun:

> 'In the name of the Common and Poor people', or at least 'In the name of the Indonesian nation with the exception of the upper classes, government officials and treacherous intellectuals...'[3] (DU, 47)

(The loyalty of the latter groups to the Republican cause was dubious in the eyes of many committed Republicans.)

The small stature of both Sjahrir and Sutomo is also retrieved from the "dark area". Sjahrir is described as

> a short little Minang who was in the habit of laughing uproariously but who word had it was clever like a mousedeer ... a skinny little pipsqueak he was like a high school kid[4] (DU, 35)

and the Commander of the Armed Forces was

> the little Bung Tomo from Surabaya, yes they were all small he was small the prime minister was small too, but let's not forget Napoleon who was also the same size as Bung Tomo[5] (DU, 50)

It is the 'Microphone of 56 Pegangsaan Timur Street', the magic realist device of the novel, which frequently retrieves aspects of the "dark areas" of Indonesian history and presents them to Iin. The microphone first reveals this role

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[1] terutama penting dijaga agar tidak setiap pemuda masuk begitu saja ke dalam WC yang khusus dipakai Bung Karno dan Bu Fatmawati; kalau Bung Hatta sih tidak pernah karena beliau selalu necis teratur, tidak hanya datang pas berdisiplin 5 menit sebelum acara mulai, tetapi juga kencing pas 5 menit sebelum naik mobil sebelum rapat atau acara-acara resmi lain; tidak seperti Bung Karno yang minta ampun kadang-kadang masih kencing di pagar samping atau di pohon di halaman, mosok pemimpin besar kok begitu

[2] Kami bangsa Indonesia dengan ini menyatakan Kemerdekaan Indonesia

[3] Atas Nama Orang-orang Kampung dan Jembel, atau boleh juga Atas nama seluruh bangsa Indonesia tetapi ditambahi, kecuali priayi dan amtenar dan sarjana pengkhianat-kooperator...

[4] seorang pendek kecil dari Minang yang suka tertawa terbahak-bahak tetapi katanya pintar seperti kancil ... kurus kecil orangnya seperti bocah SMT

[5] Bung Tomo yang kecil dari Surabaya itu, ya semua kecil dia kecil perdana menteri juga kecil, tetapi silakan ingat Napoleon yang sekecil Bung Tomo juga

on the day of the declaration of independence when, witnessed only by Tiwi, it magically steps down from the podium and goes over to her, telling her to speak:

> don't think that it's only the nation's great leaders and the intellectuals who have the right to speak into me, speak![1] (DU, 41)

From that point on, the Microphone appears before Iin from time to time to tell her stories about the *rakyat*, the suffering of the 'little people the powerless those deceived by political games those at the mercy of all the factions'.[2] (DU, 70) The "dark areas" of the Revolution invoked by the Microphone include:

> ...the yearning of the sweetheart left behind when the love of her life went off to battle[3];
>
> ... the trials and tribulations of the youth who tried to smuggle arms from Singapore by trading rubber and quinine[4] ;
>
> ... the conductors, stationmasters machinists or brakemen who steadfastly continued to carry out their duties in the face of constant irrational harassment by the army and the paramilitary[5];
>
> ...the doctors and nurses in the hospitals who were at their wits end as to how they would come by the medicines needed for the heroes and the wannabe-heroes, who sustained their injuries both from mortar fire and also from falling off the fence around the warehouse where they were trying to steal (except it was called a "guerrilla operation") medicines for thousands of undernourished citizens[6];
>
> ... the teachers who continued to work without pay educating the children of the heroes or the wannabe-heroes so that they would grow up into good intelligent adults who would never again be colonised on account of their ignorance, they were satisfied with the occasional contribution of a basket of cassava or a bowl of rice as payment[7];

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[1] jangan mengira yang berhak berbicara da dalam saya ini hanya para pemimpin besar bangsa atau tokoh-tokoh cendekiawan

[2] kaum kecil kaum tak kuasa kaum tertipu permainan politik kaum yang selalu dikalahkan dipersalahkan oleh pihak ini dan pihak itu

[3] damba rindu kekasih yang ditinggal pahlawan hati ke medan perang

[4] suka-duka para muda yang berusaha menyelundupkan senjata dari Singapura dengan jualan barter karet dan kina

[5] kondektur-kondektur, kepala stasiun masinis atau tukang-tukang rem yang penuh dedikasi menjalankan tugas mereka meski berkali-kali dimaki-maki tanpa nalar oleh tentara dan laskar-laskar

[6] dokter-dokter perawat-perawat di rumah sakit yang pusing tiga belas bagaimana mencari obat untuk para pahlawan dan sok pahlawan, yang luka-luka baik karena pecahan mortir maupun karena jatuh dari dinding pagar gudang ketika mau mencuri (tetapi operasi gerilya istilahnya) obat-obatan untuk sekian ribu penduduk kurang gizi

[7] guru-guru yang tanpa gaji masih ikhlas mengasuh anak-anak para pahlawan atau sok pahlawan itu agar tumbuh menjadi orang yang baik dan cerdas dan jangan dijajah kembali karena bodohnya, cukup

> ...the mothers and young women who were the last ones to flee and their husbands' salary never came because they were fighting the Dutch, but the children still whimpered with hunger asking for ice cream asking for prawn crackers[1];
>
> ...the farmers who were often forced to take refuge with their families in the jungles or the canyons for fear of being killed by the Dutch on suspicion of being terrorists, but who were also afraid of being captured by the *pemuda* and tortured on suspicion of being spies[2];
>
> ...(and strangest of all) the families back in Holland the Land of the Windmill who were opposed to their sons being ordered to fight against a faraway country about which they knew nothing, when they'd only just been liberated from a terrible war against a regime headed by a former corporal called Hitler and another one called Heinrich Himmler who killed about five million innocent people, that a good number of young Dutch boys upon arriving in Indonesia realised what was happening and absconded from the Dutch army and joined the Indonesian army despite the threat of the death penalty from their military court[3] (DU, 68-70)

These "dark areas" take on a life of their own, resulting in what McHale (1987, 90) calls an 'ontological flicker' between the official version of history, which is there, on the pages of the novel, and the apocryphal version. This is arguably no less a chronicle of events than the canonised works on twentieth century Indonesian history. However, it relies for its impact on the very existence of the canonical version of events.

In *Perang*, it is the ongoing deconstruction of the idea of "the enemy" which turns the *grande histoire* into a *petite histoire.* The *grande histoire* depends

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puas bila satu dan dua orang-tua murid menyumbang sekeranjang singkong atau semangkok beras sebagai uang sekolah

[1] ibu-ibu dan embak-kakak yang harus tetap di garis belakang mengungsi dan gaji suami tidak pernah dikirim karena sedang menyerang Belanda, tetapi anak-anak tetap masih menangis lapar minta es minta kerupuk

[2] petani-petani yang dengan keluarganya sering kali terpaksa menyembunyikan diri di tengah hutan atau di jurang karena takut dibunuh Belanda didakwa teroris, tetapi takut juga ditangkap para pemuda dan dianiaya karena dianggap mata-mata musuh

[3] dan aneh ya aneh, tentang keluarga-keluarga di Negeri Kincir Belanda sana yang juga sebetulnya tidak setuju anak-anak mereka disuruh berperang melawan bangsa jauh yang tidak mereka kenal, padahal baru saja mereka dibebaskan dari perang dahsyat melawan rezim yang dipimpin oleh seorang bekas kopral yang namanya Hitler dan yang satu lagi namanya Heinrich Himmler yang membunuh kira-kira lima juta orang tak bersalah, bahwa cukup banyaklah putra-putra muda Belanda yang setiba di Indonesia lalu sadar dan lari meninggalkan *Koninklijk Leger* dan menggabungkan diri dengan TNI secara konsekuen walaupun diancam hukuman mati oleh mahkamah militer mereka

for its credibility on certain unquestioned "givens": in the *Mahabharata* one of those "givens" is that the Korawas are the enemy. In *Perang*, however, even Arjuna allows for the possibility of more than one enemy, suggesting that the Korawas are really but one among many. He maintains that the very prophesy that the Pandawas will defeat the Korawas is as much their enemy as the Korawas themselves, because it has determined the world view of the Pandawas and has induced complacency in them.

For their part, the Korawas do not consistently behave like "the enemy". After Amarta has been ravaged by an earthquake, instead of interpreting the catastrophe as an omen, as do the Pandawas, the Korawas resolve to put their differences aside and do all they can to help their neighbours and cousins in their hour of need.

The demarcation line between "centre" (Pandawas) and "margin" (Korawas), a binary which is a *sine qua non* of the *Mahabharata*, is blurred in *Perang*, as is that between humans and ogres. After a skirmish at the border Baladewa discovers that the Amartan people are pillaging and plundering just as energetically as the Astinans, and he is shocked at the extent of the death and destruction in Astina. When the Amartans check the corpses of the Astinan soldiers, they discover among them old friends, penfriends, former students and teachers, even cousins and uncles. This makes them realise that the lust for war has brought out the very worst animal instincts in them: 'We've become ogres! These people are our own family!'[1] (P, 145)

Once the skirmishing has made way for a party between the ostensibly warring factions, and Bima is seen dancing with Suyudana, Yudhistira reflects,

> 'There's no longer a dividing line between right and left, between right and wrong. Nobody takes any notice any more of what has passed. Mankind has become reunited...'[2] (P, 198)

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[1] Kita sudah jadi raksasa! Ini semua saudara kita!

[2] Tak ada batas lagi antara kanan dan kiri, benar dan salah. Tak dipersoalkan lagi yang sudah terjadi. Manusia kembali menyatu...

> He could no longer work out which ones were from Astina, which ones were the Korawas. Even the ogres appeared to have become domesticated.[1] (P, 201)

The subversion of the grand narrative in *Perang*, as in *Durga Umayi*, is often undertaken in a spirit of "play". One of the boldest attempts to subvert the narrative of the *Mahabharata* occurs in *Perang*'s apocryphal version of the *Arjuna Wiwaha* story. In the "legitimised" version of the story, Arjuna is called upon to assist Indra and the other gods against an attack from the powerful demon king Niwatakawaca, using the magic arrow Pasupati which has been granted by Siwa. With the help of the nymph Dewi Supraba, the secret of Niwatakawaca's invulnerability (that he can only be killed by a human being) is discovered and when Niwatakawaca marches against the gods he is finally killed by Arjuna. As a reward for his assistance Arjuna may stay in heaven for seven days and contract a sevenfold marriage with seven celestial nymphs. After having consummated these marriages one by one Arjuna finally returns to his brothers on earth. (Ras 1976, 62) In *Perang* the story is subverted when, during a performance of the *lakon* at a wedding ceremony, Niwatakawaca is merely injured by Arjuna's arrow and then threatens to kidnap Dewi Supraba (of whom Arjuna has taken possession). The *dalang* justifies his action by saying that he was merely giving a warning to the bridal couple of what could happen at any time in their marriage. The next time the *dalang* does the performance, he is even more daring - he gives the audience three options, all differently priced: Niwatakawaca dies, Niwatakawaca lives, Niwatakawaca wins. The latter is the most expensive because of the moral lesson it imparts to Arjuna: there's no point playing around with Supraba because Niwatakawaca will only kidnap her anyway, and Arjuna's proper place is with his wife Sumbadra. (Ironically, however, when the same *dalang* marries off one of his own daughters, he allows one of his apprentices to be the *dalang*. The apprentice chooses the option of

[1] Ia tak bisa membedakan lagi mana orang Astina, mana orang Korawa. Bahkan raksasa-raksasa pun kelihatannya sudah jinak.

letting Arjuna win but also allowing Niwatakawaca to live. The old *dalang* rushes to the screen, yelling, 'Quit mucking around! Quick, kill Niwatakawaca!'[1] {P, 347})

Creative anachronism

As the discussion of Pramoedya's tetralogy demonstrated, the writing of historical fiction involves a subtle transgression between external and internal fields of reference through the introduction of historical figures into a fictional text, or the imposing of fictional characters into a real historical situation. It is a transgression which seeks to be smooth and seamless, which avoids anachronisms as far as possible and which matches the inner structure of the novel to that of the real world it is shadowing. Postmodernist "historical" fiction does the opposite: the seams are foregrounded, "official history" is violated and history and the fantastic are integrated.

Perang bears all the hallmarks of creative anachronism. The characters have the same names as the characters of the *Mahabharata*, they live in Astina and Amarta, their lives are driven by the prospect of the outbreak of the *Bharatayudha* war. Yet into this familiar, but fictional, world are introduced characters and material culture from the real world of the twentieth century, creating an "impossible hybrid". In a discussion on Amartan foreign policy, 'Arjuna, who has the responsibility of listening to the reports from America, gave a summary of the confession of Colonel Oliver North to Congress...[2] (P, 20) Sadewa then reads from an article by Professor Donald Emmerson titled 'Sharing the Pacific With the Russians' (*New York Times*, 29 June 1987).

Semar's sons, notorious for tuning out when their father begins one of his regular tirades, have a new way of doing so in *Perang*: plug in the walkman. (P, 18) For his part, Semar bemoans the fact that his sons only ever think about 'videos,

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[1] Cepat bunuh Niwatakawaca! Jangan macem-macem!

[2] Arjuna yang bertugas mendengarkan laporan-laporan dari Amerika menceritakan pengakuan Kolonel Oliver North di depan Kongres

marbles, disco and chocolate'[1] (P, 287) - instead of 'reading in the library, learning English or doing a computing course'.[2] (P, 339)

Kresna is computer-literate:

> Upon his return from the heavens Kresna ... quickly slipped into his study. He turned on his computer and continued with the work he had begun earlier. The kingdom of Dwarawati was very quiet, so he could work uninterrupted. He was trying to work out when exactly the *Bharatayudha* would break out.[3] (P, 193)

Like other postmodernist fiction[4] *Perang hints* at the possibility of a transworld identity: the boundaries between the real-world and the fictional world are violated, in what McHale (1987, 85) calls an 'ontological scandal'. The appropriation of high-profile and provocative real-life figures like Ronald Reagan (he 'just smiled as usual' - *hanya tersenyum sebagaimana biasanya* P, 20), Pramoedya and Woody Allen (P, 152) both disorients and evokes a strong reaction within the reader.

Plurality

Mangunwijaya has stated that he was inspired in his writing of *Durga Umayi* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Autumn of the Patriarch*. (Mangunwijaya 1990) Marquez's novel shares with *Durga Umayi* the features of plurality and lexical exhibitionism.

The plurality of the postmodernist text inheres in part in the blurring of the lines which separate the poles of commonly accepted binaries. Mangunwijaya himself has suggested that binaries trap us into a polemical way of looking at the world. On the one hand we cannot imagine "good" and "evil" being anything other

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[1] video, kelereng, disko, atau coklat

[2] Membaca buku di perpustakaan, belajar bahasa Inggeris, atau mengikuti kursus komputer.

[3] Setelah turun dari kayangan Kresna ... buru-buru menyelinap ke ruang kerjanya. Ia menghidupkan komputernya dan mulai meneruskan pekerjaan yang tertinggal. Dwarawati sunyi sekali, sehingga ia dapat bekerja dengan leluasa. Ia sedang memecahkan soal, kapan pastinya Baratayuda akan meletus.

[4] Some examples include Max Apple, *The Oranging of America*; Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*; John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*; Kurt Vonnegut, *Breakfast of Champions* and D.M. Thomas, *The White Hotel*

than opposites; on the other hand "good" only has real meaning if we also understand a notion of "evil". The two poles of a binary are therefore mutually exclusive yet utterly dependent upon each other. As Mangunwijaya infers (1994, 103), it is almost impossible to imagine a view of the world which defies either of those two principles:

> ...someone who says "East" automatically has the concept of "West" in the back of their mind...If there's a child, there must be parents. Could one conceive of a husband without a wife?[1]

If binaries do indeed imprison our thinking, then any attempt to break them down should be liberating as well as confronting.

In *Durga Umayi*, Iin's sexuality is frequently presented as ambiguous and hence she is unsure of her gender identity as a woman. Sexual ambivalence is manifested in the novel through the duality of her alter-ego, Durga Umayi. The edges between masculinity and femininity in her gender identity are blurred and never stable. Iin wonders if her "male" qualities derive from the fact that she shared the womb with her twin brother, her own hormones being contaminated by his male ones (which are also by extension "imperialist" and "capitalist" - undesirable qualities in the novel are automatically linked with the masculine gender). After she has joined the army and made a name for herself as a fearless fighter, Iin's obvious femaleness creates an enigma in the totally male world in which she now feels at home. Her male comrades acknowledge her fighting prowess, while at the same time spying on her while she is in the bathroom. She thus sparks two competing responses in them, her aggressive "male" qualities inspire a begrudging respect, while her obvious female attributes arouse lust.

Iin's enigmatic gender is highlighted by her refusal to give into the demands of her biology. She regards the traditional view of woman's place as *dapur-sumur-dan-kasur* (kitchen-well-and-mattress) as belonging to the oppressive

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[1] ...siapa yang omong "Timur", di kepala belakang musti mengakui adanya realita pembanding "Barat"...Kalau ada anak, mesti ada ayah-ibu. Apa ada suami tanpa istri?

mentality of *oldefos*.[1] Moreover, she is of the view that her breasts were not intended first and foremost to suckle babies, but rather to prove Freud wrong in his theory that 'girls have always resented not having a bird in their laps like boys'.[2] (DU, 77) On the contrary, in her opinion, 'it is boys who from puberty on begin to resent not having fruit on their chests, like every good tree has fruit.'[3] (DU, 77-8) Her decision to remain childless brings her into conflict with no less than Soekarno himself who tries to persuade her that the greatest gift a woman can give to her nation is to give birth to patriots. She shares her childless status with the *wayang* heroine Srikandi - a man who has been changed into a woman, and who was once described in an advertisement for a performance of *Srikandi Ngedan* as 'wilful... selfish!... beautiful...lovely...enchanting...and...horrifying.' (Brandon 1967, 254)

The notion of things not being what they seem, a common feature of the postmodernist novel, is manifested in *Durga Umayi* through disguise, multiplicity and duplicity. As a literary device, this is a kind of *trompe l'oeil* which leads away from the "real" text to a confusing sub-text. It is a tactic used by postmodernist writers in order to present multiple realities to the reader, and in *Durga Umayi* it serves to emphasise the feeling expressed by Kang Brojol that 'these days everything is in turmoil, there are no clear lines to follow, there's no logic, no laws.'[4] (DU, 164) Furthermore, humans never see the world as it really is; rather than see the world through a glass lens, we see it 'with our heart with our feelings with our tradition with our religion with our eternal vision with desire and submission'.[5] (DU, 114)

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[1] Old Established Forces - Soekarno's derogatory term for most Western capitalist powers

[2] wanita ... sejak kecil dihinggapi rasa minder karena tidak memiliki burung di pangkuannya seperti anak lelaki

[3] kaum lelakilah yang dari masa puber selalu merasa minder terhadap jenis lain karena merasa tidak punya buah-buah di dadanya seperti sepantasnya setiap pohon yang baik punya buah

[4] zaman sekarang ini semua simpang-siur dan kacau tidak ada garis haluannya, tidak ada adatnya

[5] dengan hati dengan perasaan dengan tradisi dengan agama dengan pandangan semesta dengan nafsu dan dambaan hati

Multiplicity is also a defining feature of Putu Wijaya's work; he turns heterogeneity into an art form. Writing of Wijaya's short stories, Mohamad notes (1994, xiii):

> Character A can become character B and character B can become character C, and vice versa... It's fair to say that Putu Wijaya's fiction has no clearly definable centre.[1]

Clark (1998, 11) maintains that the presence of Semar is 'almost ubiquitous' to the genre of *sastra wayang* in Indonesia, particularly as a potentially subversive figure. Sears too (1996, 242) points out that, concomitant with the parodying of the traditional power-figures of the *wayang* in contemporary performances, Semar and his clown sons are assuming larger and more significant roles. Clark (1998, 12) compellingly suggests that Semar has been appropriated by postmodernist fiction in Indonesia as a challenge to the New Order regime, and has become a sort of indigenous postmodernist icon. In *Perang* - where Semar often engages in conversation with his own alter-ego, the Balinese "Semar", Tualen - what is foregrounded is the process of transformation of Semar from humble clown-servant to larger-than-life cult figure. The transformation occurs through two motifs: repeated attempts by Semar to change his physical appearance, particularly the size of his mouth, and his obsession with being photographed.

At the beginning of the *goro-goro*[2] scene, Semar rues the fact that he seems to have outgrown his usefulness:

> I no longer fulfil the function of Semar-who-knows-everything. They don't want to listen to the wayang any more, they've got their own stories. They've got Pedang Inti Es, they've got Superman, they've got 007, and all the rest. I'm past my use-by date. It's outrageous that the

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[1] Tokoh A bisa berubah menjadi tokoh B dan tokoh B bisa berubah menjadi tokoh C, demikian juga sebaliknya...Fiksi Putu Wijaya nyaris tidak memilih satu sentrum yang mana pun.

[2] The *goro-goro* scene of the *wayang* is the 'Nature's Turmoil and Clown scene, and usually includes a long scene in which Semar and his sons sing, dance, quarrel, fight and joke. At the same time the earth is being racked by natural disasters because the hero of the play has upset the balance of the world through intense meditation. See Brandon 1970, 23-24

> Semar who knows all the secrets of the world should be reduced to the status of an ornament. A mere antique.[1] (P, 233)

He then sets out to subvert the "essential" Semar, just as the other *wayang* characters have become de-essentialised throughout the novel. He vacillates between being the father of Bagong, Petruk and Gareng and the Semar who has no children; between being the Semar from Karang Tumaritis and the Semar who was born in Ancol Art Market in Jakarta; between being Semar the adviser to the Pandawas and Semar the expert on all aspects of contemporary culture from the stock market to Rendra's plays. Far from aligning himself with Tualen's assertion that 'we're only puppets, at the mercy of the *dalang*'[2], (P, 236) Semar periodically takes on a new life of his own, transcending the powers of the *dalang* - a metaphor for a potent and potentially menacing challenge to the status quo.

The barometer of Semar's attempts to reinvent himself is the size of his mouth, which he calls 'the mirror of the soul' (*cermin rohani kita*, P, 243). Persuaded to have plastic surgery on his mouth 'for the sake of harmony' (*untuk menjaga harmoni*, P, 241), Semar becomes the proud owner of an efficient mouth which can, as the need arises, contract to the size of the eye of a needle or expand to consume the earth and all its living creatures. Once his family notices the change, however, they are appalled:

> They suddenly became aware that the mouth of their beloved patriarch was in fact too perfect. Beyond the new streamlined mouth yawned something immense and cavernous. They felt threatened by the incongruity between the appearance and the substance. It terrified them.[3] (P, 243)

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[1] Fungsi saya sudah bukan lagi sebagai Semar yang tahu segala seluk-beluk cerita. Mereka tidak suka lagi mendengarkan wayang, mereka sudah punya cerita sendiri. Ada Pedang Inti Es, ada Suparman, ada 007, ada banyak lagi yang lain. Kita sudah dianggap kuno. Masak Semar yang tahu rahasia dunia cuma dijadikan pajangan saja. Barang antik tok, terlalu.

[2] kita hanya wayang. Terserah Ki Dalang saja.

[3] Kini mereka baru menyadari, bahwa bentuk mulut kepala keluarga itu terlalu manis. Di balik mulut yang sempit itu, terbayang sesuatu yang lebar dan luas. Ketidaksamaan antara tampak dan isi itu, tiba-tiba menimbulkan perasaan terancam dan kesan, mengerikan.

His mouth restored by further plastic surgery to its familiar grotesque dimensions, the next attempt to impose a "different reality" upon Semar is undertaken by the photographer who comes to take his annual *Hari Raya* portrait of Semar and his family. The photographer wants to streamline Semar's mouth, which detracts from the harmony of the photograph. The camera, of course, destroys illusions and 'opposes to each figure the mirror of truth' (de Nerval cited in Mitchell 1988, 22), and in the final family portrait Semar appears 'friendly, authoritative, youthful, congenial, wise'[1] - and even quite sexy. (P, 254) As Sontag has suggested (1982, 354-355), photographs do more than reproduce experience, they in fact redefine reality - reality becomes 'more and more like what we are shown by cameras.' The photographer is thus a creator of (a) reality and in *Perang*, after the photographer has finished all his assignments, there are no longer any ugly people in the village.

If further proof is needed that the photographer has in fact created a new reality for the people of Karang Tumaritis, he processes an earlier set of negatives, taken before Semar's "streamlining". The difference between Semar in the two sets of photos is startling - like comparing Yudhistira with Suyudana - and suddenly the two photographs, which have taken on the dimensions of "real life", begin fighting with each other.

The privileging of multiplicity in *Durga Umayi* and *Perang* serves to foreground the potential co-existence of multiple realities and to blur the boundaries between "truth" and "illusion". As the reader, I found that this unsettled any sense of ontological certainty I brought bring to the text.

Lexical exhibitionism

McHale refers to the device of lexical exhibitionism - using rare, pedantic, archaic, technical and/or foreign words which serve to foreground the words over the world. 'Lexical exhibitionism' is a very apt description of the overall effect of the devices used in *Durga Umayi*: never using one verb or adjective when

[1] ramah-tamah, berwibawa, awet muda, simpatik, dan bijaksana

three or four are available, not undermining the effect of the words by using punctuation, letting the words take the foreground, frequently using Javanese or foreign words.

Durga Umayi is a riotous exposition of the possibilities of the Indonesian language. In page-long sentences with minimal punctuation, Mangunwijaya uses assonance, alliteration and hyperbole to demonstrate the lyrical nature of the language.[1] It is visual as well as aural in its impact. The lines of words with letters being repeated regularly and no punctuation marks to interrupt the flow creates a picture which has nothing to do with the meaning of the sentence. The following description of Bung Karno and Ibu Fatmawati's laundry, with its repeated *di-* verbs, repetition of the relative pronoun *yang*, and the vowel "a" in almost every word, is both a visual word-picture and, when spoken, a sort of mantra:

> Dan karena segala macam pakaian yang direndam dicuci diperas dibelawu dikelantang dibasahi diseterika dilipat rapi itu tidak hanya dari sang insinyur ahli pidato dan istrinya yang putih yang pulen yang mulus yang manis yang sani yang cantik yang santri yang dipetik dari Bengkulu itu saja, tetapi juga dari teman kawan sahabat saudara yang ternyata banyak sekali... (DU, 30)

A different picture is produced, through the frequent use of "e", "l" and "k" in the description of the soldiers' complaints about their food:

> nasinya kurang putih kurang pulen terlalu keras atau terlalu lembek atau agak tegik dan tempe tahunya terlalu kecil atau sayurnya sudah agak kecut ... (DU, 50)

In the following satirical description of the way Lekra ideology sees the city of Yogyakarta, the fondness for creating compound words in the Indonesian language is overworked to the point where the reader's eyes become focussed on the hyphens rather than the words, and at the end of the sentence (which goes on for another

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[1] Examples include the following: ratu rangah rakus rampus dari loka lanyau lanyah Setragandamayit (DU, vii); direndam dicuci diperas dibelawu dikelantang dibasahi diseterika dilipat (DU, 30); yang putih yang pulen yang mulus yang manis yang sani yang cantik, santik santri (DU, 30); kurus kempot kerempeng kurang gizi (DU,44); wanita secantik sesanting sesani sesanjai semodel Tante Wi (DU, 85); didesain dijahit dipelisir dibordir diplakir dilogo (DU, 89); lalai lupa larangan langsai lelaki bahkan mengimbau manis melamar langut lampung (DU, 138); linglung melamun landung bingung (DU, 138)

page) the reader has almost forgotten what it was all about, although our attention has been retained by the sheer poetry of the words:

> bekas ibu kota RI yang menurut ideologi Lekra masih feodal borjuis alon-alon-waton-kelakon-selambat-andong-berkuda-kurus-kerutak-memalukan; masyarakat yang sukanya hanya gula-kelapa geplak. Bantul yang terlalu gurih terlalu manis, racun nina-bobo bagi kaum proletar yang justru membutuhkan gizi yang lebih dialektis... (DU, 108)

The description of a crowd scene which follows demonstrates Mangunwijaya's seeming inability to resist the use of just one more synonym, just one more verb,

> in unison the crowd of maybe a hundred thousand roared like a hurricane boomed cheered shouted screamed clapped whistled[1] (DU, 27)

The frequent use of synonyms both expands yet undermines the meaning of the passage. In the example cited above, the simple sentence 'The crowd roared' conveys a clear unambiguous message; the addition of half a dozen more verbs has the effect of breaking the mimetic illusion. This is a post-structuralist form of subversion: the reader is not allowed to push the words into the background and imagine the scene for him/herself. S/he is not allowed to ignore the language; the words themselves become the focus.

The numbers seventeen, eight and (nineteen) forty five (symbolising Independence Day on the 17th August 1945) are used frequently in the novel, in a way which parodies, rather than glorifies, their significance in modern Indonesia:

> Our Republic extends the distance of London to Moscow and Stockholm to Rome; and its population is seventeen times that of Holland, our former masters, and eight times the size of Germany, and one thousand nine hundred and forty five times that of the Kingdom of Brunei.[2] (DU, 92)

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[1] serentaklah seluruh rakyat di alun-alun yang mungkin mencapai jumlah seratus ribu bergemuruh bagaikan prahara berguntur bersorak berseru berteriak bertepuk bersiul

[2] Republik kita besarnya seluas jarak London sampai Moskwa dan dari Stockholm sampai Roma; dan penduduknya tujuh belas kali Negeri Belanda bekas tuannya, dan delapan kali Jerman Raya, dan seribu sembilan ratus empat puluh lima kali Negara Brunei Darussalam

The same symbolism abounds in descriptions of the tourist park proposal, which has seventeen objectives, eight main projects and will be built on one thousand nine hundred and forty five hectares of land; furthermore it will have one thousand nine hundred and forty five hotels and motels, seventeen banks and eight casinos.

Frequently when reading *Durga Umayi* we find that, as is often the case in postmodernist fiction, 'the action fades, the lights go off behind the scrim, and we are left facing the words on the page':

> This happens...whenever our attention is distracted from the projected world and made to fix on its literary medium. (McHale 1987, 148)

The effect is to efface the "world" that is supposedly being created through the text, in favour of the words. Lodge similarly refers to the use of excess in the postmodernist novel, where a literary trope is worked, reworked and overworked until it develops a life of its own, and takes off, as it were, losing touch with the context in which it was created. The end result is a flurry of words but no world to which to attach them.

An example of narrative passage which gets carried away with itself occurs in the comparison between the rustic rural lifestyle of Kang Brojol and the high-powered fast-paced one of his sister, who is only happy

> in the midst of the roar of diesel engines semi-trailers that belch out polluted black foul-smelling smoke, now in the middle lane now in the right lane now suddenly veering to the right like the zippy little bajaj that don't seem to care that there could be a Merc or a city bus or a becak or a crazy pedestrian crossing the road calmly smoking, hands in pockets watching a pair of mating doves as if he were in some alleyway in the kampung[1] (DU, 22)

Lexical exhibitionism is also a source of much of the humour of the novel. Consider the following narrative, where the exhibitionism of the language fits nicely with the exhibitionism of Iin's lifestyle:

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[1] di tengah raungan bising mesin-mesin diesel truk-truk gandengan yang mengentutkan asap polusi hitam harum oli serba simpang-siur, kali ini di jalur tengah kali kemudian jalur kanan lalu tiba-tiba membelok tajam ke kiri ke kanan seperti bajaj-bajaj gegas-gesit yang tidak ambil pusing ada Mercy kek ada bis kota kek atau becak atau pejalan kaki edan yang melintasi jalan sambil kalem merokok, tangan di saku menengadah memandang sepasang burung merpati berpacaran seolah-olah dia di lorong kampung Pameungpeuk...

> Tante Tiwi alias Madame Nussy hidup dari hotel yang satu ke motel yang lain dari apartemen di Paris pindah ke suite di Wina pindah lagi ke ranch di Meksiko ke bungalow Puncak atau Pulau Seribu, semua tempat eksklusif entah Makao entah Monako pokoknya penuh sapta pesona pariwisata dengan stail hidup super de luxe yang dia pelajari dari film-film serial seperti Return to Eden atau Dynasty atau The Bold and the Beautiful yang khusus dicanangkan oleh TVRI untuk melatih warga negaranya yang berminat dan berbakat untuk sedikit bergaya internasional dan tidak canggung memalukan kalau disuruh berlobi entah politik entah ekonomi dengan acara-acara dan metode-metode yang tidak pernah diajarkan di kampus mereka dulu. (DU, 85)
>
> (Aunt Tiwi also known as Madame Nussy lived from hotel to motel from an apartment in Paris to a suite in Vienna moving again to a ranch in Mexico to a bungalow in Puncak or Pulau Seribu, all of them exclusive locations whether in Macao or Monaco the most important thing is that they could attract the tourists with the super de luxe lifestyle that she had studied in soapies like Return to Eden or Dynasty or The Bold and the Beautiful which had been specially screened by the government TV station in order to encourage Indonesians with a modicum of talent and interest to adopt an international style and not behave in a gauche manner when asked to do some lobbying, whether it be political or economic, using methods they'd never learnt at university.)

The English translation, while conveying the satire on the lifestyles of the rich and famous and the sources of knowledge in New Order Indonesia, cannot, however, retain the impact of the lexical exhibitionism, which relies so much on the use of borrowed English words.

The lexical exhibitionism of *Durga Umayi* throws up obstacles for a reader who is attempting to reconstruct the world the novel is purportedly projecting. The reader is forced to focus on the very process of reconstructing that world, rather than the world itself. The world of the text is like a shadow, always present, sometimes fading, sometimes sharper in focus, but inevitably eclipsed by the novel's lexical extravagance.

Sobat, Teror, Kroco, Byar pet

Postmodern picaresque

The protagonists of *Sobat, Teror, Kroco* and *Byar pet* have much in common with the *picaro*, the roguish "hero" of the Spanish picaresque novels. Like the *picaro*, they are in fact anti-heroes, 'ordinary people with no special qualities at all'[1] (Wijaya 1982a), characters forced to survive on their own wits, usually enduring suffering and humiliation in the process. Like the *picaro*, their adventures are frequently blackly amusing and their fortunes are related in a spirit of satire:

> What if they were to find out what was in my bag?...two pairs of underpants, a singlet and a handkerchief which were really on the nose. Some leftover bread from yesterday - how embarrassing. A child's toy which I picked up in the street. An old newspaper.[2] (BP, 142-3)

Unlike many *picaro*s, however, the anti-heroes of these novels do not reconcile themselves to the harshness and deceptiveness of the world by conforming to it. The *picaro*s in these novels are adrift in a sea of ontological uncertainty and ultimately there is no way of coming to terms with it:

> He leapt onto a bus at random. He was feeling uptight and empty inside. It transpired that the bus was going to the port. Aji got on another bus, again without registering where it was going. This one took him to the outskirts of another town. Aji got off, and blindly got onto another one. In this manner he was flung from one bus stop to another.[3] (S, 12)

These characters can thus be construed as postmodernist *picaro*s, whose role is not to interpret or to fit into the world in which they find themselves but rather to demonstrate the existence of a plurality of worlds: There are worlds in which people are fitted with plastic hearts and give birth to hermaphrodites at the age of seventy. There are worlds in which people engage in conversation with trees and becaks and periodically discover that they are invisible. There are worlds which are suspended between existence and non-existence, where characters can be both dead and not

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[1] orang biasa yang tak punya keistimewaan apa-apa

[2] Bagaimana kalau mereka tahu apa isi tas itu?...dua buah celana dalam, singlet dan sapu tangan yang betul-betul sudah berbau apak. Ada roti sisa kemaren-kemaren yang memalukan. Juga ada mainan anak-anak yang dapat mungut di jalan. Koran bekas.

[3] Ia sambar bis begitu saja. Hatinya gelisah dan kosong. Bis itu ternyata membawanya ke pelabuhan. Aji naik bis yang lain, juga tanpa melihat ke mana arahnya. Bis itu membawanya ke ujung kota yang lain. Aji turun, lalu naik bis yang lain tanpa peduli. Demikianlah ia terpental dari stanplat ke stanplat.

dead, murdered and not murdered. There are worlds where bus drivers sleep as they drive. There are worlds in which people speak to each other but are mutually incomprehensible; there are worlds in which human emotions serve no purpose.

Whereas the reading of these novels in the previous chapter looked for the sub-text in a search for an explanation of why these worlds are as they are, a postmodernist reading adopts the ontological position which accepts them as they are. On such a reading these texts display a type of ontological poetics which is both self-referential and self-contained. They are post-metaphysical; postmodernism has abandoned what Eagleton (1988, 143) calls the 'pathological itch' to get below the surface for deeper meaning, and embraces instead the notion that a given world is just the way it is, and not some other way.

This is a position which informs Wijaya's so-called 'concept of spectacle' (*konsep tontonan*) which he uses to explain how he "does" theatre. (Wijaya 1997b, 420-428). Part of this concept involves 'starting with what's in front of you' (*bertolak dari yang ada*). (Wijaya 1988a) 'Starting with what's in front of you' means that you can create a spectacle - a self-contained world - out of almost anything: 'the sea, mountains, valleys, night, day, birth, death, war, family, outer space, grass, lizards, dreams, ghosts, desire, love, the future, ideals...'[1] (Wijaya 1997b, 359)

Like postmodernist fiction, a spectacle is a an ontological genre: it presents a world requiring no explanation, a world which simply "is". While an audience might be confronted by it, it is not the meaning of the spectacle which confronts them, but rather the very spectacle itself. Wijaya employs the same tactic in his prose writings, the (invariably one-word) titles of which usually indicate the "world" which is conveyed in the story. A random glance at the index of his anthology *Protes*, for example, reveals titles as diverse as *PHK* ('Retrenchment'),

[1] laut, gunung, lembah, malam, siang, kelahiran, kematian, peperangan, keluarga, angkasa luar, rumput, cecak, mimpi, hantu, nafsu, cinta, masa yang akan datang, cita-cita...

Kenapa ('Why'), *Tak* ('No'), *Bebal* ('Stupid'), *Berita* ('News'), *Cita-cita* ('Ideals'), *Sport*, *Logo* and *Alamat* ('Address').

Banality

Although frequently presenting worlds in collision - plausible worlds in collision with patently implausible worlds - the tone of these novels, like that of other postmodernist fiction, is 'unfantastically banal'. (McHale 1987, 76) The fact that the protagonists of *Teror* are equipped with plastic hearts is presented as a "given":

> Since getting her plastic heart, Susy felt that something had changed within her.[1] (T, 5)

as is the pregnancy of a seventy-year old woman:

> we would like to inform you that, as we write this letter, your grandmother is pregnant. Nine months pregnant in fact.[2] (T, 124)

In *Sobat*, after Aji has "murdered" Isak, Isak's fiancee reacts with characteristic understatement:

> She approached the body. She touched it. Then she looked towards Aji with a fearful expression on her face. Aji was motionless. 'This isn't Isak,' said Ina. 'It's you.'[3] (S, 8)

A novel in which a person talks to trees, writes Heryanto in the Introduction to *Kroco*, is no big deal. 'That's literature' (*Namanya saja sastra*), he adds. But it is not a feature of all literature. Realist fiction tries as far as possible to replicate the structure of "reality" in that it reproduces within its pages the causality, logic and character development of the "real world". Such fiction would not allow for the possibility of a man talking to trees, or *becak*s - and of them answering back. Pure fantasy (such as science fiction) on the other hand demands suspension of

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[1] Setelah mendapat jantung plastik, Susy merasa ada yang berubah dalam dirinya.

[2] kami kabarkan kepada kamu sekalian bahwa, tetap ketika surat ini ditulis, nenek kamu sudah mengandung. Bahkan sudah sembilan bulan.

[3] Ia mendekati tubuh itu. Ia menyentuhnya. Lalu ia memandang ke arah Aji dengan muka yang ketakutan. Aji tampak terpaku. 'Ini bukan Isak,' kata Ina, 'Ini kamu sendiri!'

disbelief on all fronts: all the rules of logic, causality and character development are broken. It is the literature of 'cognitive estrangement'. (Suvin 1979, 4) But in the magic realism of the postmodernist text, the fantastical notion of a man conversing with the trees may be juxtaposed with the banality of his day to day existence:

> He no longer had a job, since the boss of the tea plantation had given him the sack. He had a go at selling petrol, but was forced out of business by the kids whose patch he was working. Now the only thing that kept him occupied was going to his garden. He planted chillies, tomatoes and eggplants. And he talked to the trees.[1] (K, 3)

What I found most confronting as the reader was the fact that, as McHale says (1987, 76), the characters are 'impossibly blase in the face of miraculous violations of natural law'. It is a detachment exhibited by the characters in all these novels.

"Postmodernist" allegory

It is in their potentially allegorical qualities that these novels hover on the cusp of epistemological and ontological concerns. Postmodernist texts typically resist readings that go beneath their material reality - viz the disclaimer made by Robbe-Grillet to his novel *In the Labyrinth*:

> The reader is...requested to see in it only the objects, actions, words, and events which are described, without attempting to give them either more or less meaning than in his own life, or in his own death.

Allegory, the inverse of metaphor, requires the reader to supply the literal frame of reference missing from the text. Although McHale suggests (1987, 141) that allegory can be a tool for foregrounding ontological themes, it seems more likely that a reader will use allegory as an epistemological tool, to help interpret the world of the text, the very act which Robbe-Grillet and other postmodernists beseech the reader not to do.

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[1] Ia tak punya pekerjaan, sejak dipecat oleh juragan teh itu. Pernah ia coba-coba jadi pengecer bensin, tapi kemudian ditendang oleh anak-anak muda yang menguasai kaki lima. Kesibukannya sekarang hanya ke kebun. Menanam cabe, tomat, terung. Dan bicara dengan pohon-pohon.

The reading of these novels in the previous chapter suggested possible allegorical interpretations: the futility of both effort and indolence; man's inability to reach out to others; the prison of human relationships; the aloneness of the human condition. But traditional allegories are generally transparent: the writer uses the device with the clear intention of soliciting an allegorical interpretation from the reader. Wijaya, in common with other postmodernist writers, uses allegory in a slippery, elusive way: 'Everything is *potentially* allegorical, but nothing is actually an allegory'. (McHale 1987, 141) The result is "over determined allegories"; everything is suffused by the presence of allegory.

Despite this differentiation between "unequivocal" and "elusive" allegories, and despite the claim by McHale (1987, 142) that the indeterminate allegory produces an 'ontological oscillation', the search for the missing literal frame of reference nonetheless sends the reader on an epistemological quest. In their use of startling metaphors - the plastic hearts; the dead-but-not-dead drunks; the interminable wait in the bus stop; the talking trees; the fluidity of the characters' names - Wijaya's novels demonstrably do on occasion encourage an allegorical reading. But these allegorical references are not seamlessly woven into the text as they are in traditional allegories. They don't suggest a unified interpretive framework of the text. They are problematic because they only "explain" things to a limited degree. It is part of the juxtaposition between the banal and the fantastic, a juxtaposition which problematises an integrated allegorical interpretation.

Privileging the postmodernist perspective

In chapter one I contended that the application of different reading strategies would privilege different features of a text and thus in effect produce a "different literary work". My original readings of the texts under consideration in this chapter focussed on contextualising them within the Indonesian environment in which they were written, privileging those features of them which engaged with the

Indonesian sociopolitical and/or historical context, and with the author as a narrative presence.

In this chapter I have argued that these texts also share significant features with postmodernist discourse produced outside the Indonesian context. These readings are thus "extra-contextual", in that they engage with a body of theory - an interpretive strategy - produced by non-Indonesian theorists. In these readings I have used as my two main points of reference Bodden's notion (1998, 244) of a 'particular Indonesian manifestation' of postmodernism and McHale's idea of 'limit-modernism'.

I have drawn heavily on McHale's notion that postmodernist fiction focuses on ontological concerns, marking a shift in "dominant" from modernist fiction which was largely epistemological. In this respect the texts under consideration here may be regarded as residing on the cusp between the epistemological focus of modernism and the ontological focus of postmodernism. They are limit-modernist texts and as such have much in common with limit-modernism elsewhere. It is not my purpose to suggest that Bodden's notion is wrong. Rather, the analysis presented here suggests that these texts do sit comfortably with limit-modernism as an internationally-defined literary genre.

Further, this reading foregrounds the ways in which *Durga Umayi* and *Perang* reject the exclusivity of insight of the "grand narratives" of Indonesian history and the *Mahabharata* respectively. It is here that we witness the incorporation of postmodernist techniques by Indonesian writers to challenge the authority of the New Order regime and its apparatuses, in the same way as theatre groups and poets have challenged those institutions. This rejection incorporates the tropes and stylistic devices - plurality, carnivalised narrative, lexical exhibitionism and creative anachronism - of postmodernist fiction elsewhere.

The reading of *Sobat*, *Teror*, *Kroco* and *Byar pet* in this chapter foregrounds the ontological concerns of the novels. On this reading, the blurring between reality and fantasy in the novels, and their allegorical elusiveness, is a

function of the ontological uncertainty, the decentredness, of the postmodern condition. This differs from the epistemological approach in the previous chapter which looked for metaphorical meaning in the fantastical narrative and startling literary tropes. That approach suggested that the novels are in part about the futility of attempting to communicate through language, about the sense of metaphysical anguish at the human condition. A postmodernist reading makes no such epistemological claims; it contends that the novels simply present the world as it **is** - decentred, unfocussed, depthless - without any attempt to understand **why** that may be so.

CHAPTER SIX

POST-COLONIAL READINGS

> Can we legitimately ask more of a text than it asks of itself? Post-colonial criticism suggests that we can... (Brydon 1991, 141)

At its most fundamental level, post-colonialism refers to textual practices which engage with and contest 'colonialism's discourses, power structures and social hierarchies'. (Gilbert and Tompkins 1996, 2) As a reading strategy, post-colonial literary criticism endeavours to identify the "post-coloniality" which resides in a given text. While the postmodernist reading in the previous chapter identified ways in which those texts subvert notions of genre, ontological certainty and exclusivity of insight, a post-colonial reading is more overtly political, in that it seeks to identify the ways in which the texts destabilise the premises of colonial power, and/or ways in which they foreground the effects of colonialism.

Like postmodernism, post-colonialism does not have a master narrative: it encompasses a 'remarkably heterogeneous set of subject positions, professional fields, and critical enterprises.'(Slemon 1994, 16)[1] Similarly, in their concern to avoid the notion that post-colonialism is in any sense a totalising

[1] Like most theory, however, post-colonialism runs the risk of becoming a totalising discourse. Mishra and Hodge (1991, 401), for example, are critical of the Orientalising tendencies ('another totalising form of scholarship'), which they perceive in *The Empire Writes Back*. Brydon (1991, 139) takes Hutcheon to task for her purported search for the 'single voice' of post-colonialism. Brydon also refers to criticism of JanMohamed's attempts to totalise post-colonialism.

discourse, Mishra and Hodge (1991, 405) stress that post-colonialism is 'a set of "heterogeneous moments" arising from very different historical processes'.[1]

The post-colonial reading in this chapter looks for ways in which the effects of colonialism are foregrounded in the novels of Pramoedya and Mangunwijaya. It is a reading which takes on board Brydon's claim that post-colonial criticism should be understood as an attempt to reveal aspects of a text which may hitherto have remained hidden and which, by inference, may not have been consciously invoked by the author.

My reading focuses on two signifiers of post-coloniality: place and displacement, and the deconstruction of national history.

Place and displacement is a common concern of post-colonial literatures. (Indeed Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin {1989, 9} suggest that it is a concern of **all** post-colonial literature in english.[2]) I argue that key characters in these novels experience crises of identity as they struggle to establish their "place" in an environment which has been shaped by the dynamics of colonialism.

Pramoedya's tetralogy can be read as an essay on the way in which the colonial situation "manufactured" both the colonisers and the colonised. As Mitchell (1988, 33) says, 'colonial power required the country to become readable, like a book'. In order for the colony to become readable, the colonial power focuses on the issue of place. Order can only be guaranteed if everything is in its rightful place. This in turn brings with it the need for control, surveillance and silencing. The search for "place" in the tetralogy is intensified by the growing tide of nationalism, which everywhere witnessed the beginning of the end of colonial rule.

In *Burung-burung manyar* Teto's search for place is enacted in, indeed is almost a metaphor for, the turbulence of decolonisation. His struggle to come to terms with his feelings and responses to the inherent tensions of the

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[1] Mishra and Hodge (1991, 409) also distinguish between 'oppositional' (hyphenated) post-colonialism and 'complicit' (unhyphenated) postcolonialism, an always present 'underside' of colonialism itself.

[2] These writers chose the non-capitalised word "english" to differentiate the language as it is spoken by different post-colonial communities from "English", the language of the imperial centre.

decolonisation process is compounded by the fact that he is aware from an early age that being an *Indo* to some degree sets him apart from others. Nor can he live comfortably with the privilege afforded by his *priyayi* status, and although his rejection of *priyayi* values is not as painful for him as it is for Minke, it nonetheless increases his sense of being at odds with a world in which he must try to find a place for himself. Almost as if he were genetically "marked" to be come a renegade, Teto then distances himself even further from his fellow countrymen by joining KNIL. As Mangunwijaya says (1986c, 105), it is 'his "role" to endure failure after failure because he continually makes the wrong choices'.[1]

In *Burung-burung rantau* the search for place is enmeshed in Mangunwijaya's "post-Indonesian" discourse. His attempt to blur the East-West binary can be seen as indicative of what Said (1994, 261) calls 'a noticeable pull away from separatist nationalism towards a more integrative view of human community and human liberation', which he regards as being one of the 'great topics' of decolonising cultural resistance.

In his search for a metaphor for the varying degrees of attachment to their native soil displayed by those seeking to transcend provincialism and nationalism, Said (1994, 407) recalls the 'hauntingly beautiful' lines of Hugo of St Victor:

> The person who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is a foreign place.

The analogy is a useful one for examining the place and displacement of the members of the Wiranto family in *Burung-burung rantau*.

The second signifier of post-coloniality foregrounded in this reading is the deconstruction of national history. Following Gilbert and Tompkins (1996, 107), I suggest that *Burung-burung manyar* and *Durga Umayi* present, in fictionalised form, "other sides" of twentieth-century Indonesian history. I also draw upon the ideas of Appiah (1991), who proposes a catalogue of "post-s" in his

[1] "bertugas" untuk menjalani kegagalan demi kegagalan karena serba salah pilih

identification of two broad stages in post-colonial literature in Africa. The first stage represents a celebration of the nation; the novels of this stage are 'realist legitimations of nationalism'. (Appiah 1991, 349) The novels of the second stage essentially seek to deconstruct the national history presented in those realist novels. This deconstruction takes several forms. Using Yambo Ouologuem's novel *Le Devoir de Violence* to illustrate his point, Appiah claims that such novels 'reject not only the Western *imperium* but also the nationalist project of the post-colonial national bourgeoisie'. Other novels are post-realist, standing in stark contrast to the realism which is 'part of the tactic of nationalist legitimation.' (Appiah 1991, 349) Post-realist novels frequently borrow from the techniques of both modernism and postmodernism. Deconstruction sometimes takes the form of postnativism, rejecting the return to traditions which was a feature of novels of the first stage. Finally, in their repudiation of national history, Appiah identifies postnationalism as a feature of novels of the second stage, they offer the prospect of a transnational rather than a national solidarity.

While *Burung-burung manyar* and *Durga Umayi* do not fit neatly into Appiah's paradigm, a post-colonial reading of these novels reveals some of the features of his purported 'second stage'. *Burung-burung manyar*, while not overtly rejecting the nationalist project, does call into question some aspects of it. *Durga Umayi,* as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, uses some of the techniques of postmodernism to present a 'post-realist' view of post-colonial Indonesia.

Place and Displacement

The displacement of the main characters in these novels is engendered by a number of processes which are central to the dynamics of colonialism, decolonisation and post-coloniality. The first of these is the colonial need for the ordering of space, which produces the "displaced persons" in Pramoedya's tetralogy. The second is the process of hybridisation as a state emerges from the shackles of colonialism and endeavours to re-invent itself, symbolised in Teto's hybridity, which

is both organic and intentional. The third is globalisation, the fruits of which are the highly successful but ultimately rootless protagonists of *Burung-burung rantau*.

The colonial need for "place"

In the process of being redefined by colonialism, individuals inevitably experience displacement, alienation and marginalisation. The colonial need for "placement", because it is imposed upon a preexisting set of dynamics, necessarily entails "displacement". As the hegemonic power of the colonial government is maintained through strict controls and an emphasis on keeping everything in its place, the coloniser must guard against disorder, which requires a constant vigilance. This is done in many ways: by disempowering leaders or potential leaders, by corruption, by police oppression, and by aborting all popular movements. The mechanisms which are used are measured and continuous, entailing invigilation and the management of space. In the Indies in the early years of the twentieth century these mechanisms were in the hands of the *Politieke Inlichtingendienst* (PID), which had as its most important task the surveillance of radical political organisations.[1]

The power to execute these methods of control is vested in the hands of a few individuals, such as the fictional Pangemanann in Pramoedya's tetralogy. Pangemanann is assigned to restore the emergent nationalism in the Indies to its proper place - namely, the hands of government-approved organisations such as *Boedi Oetomo*, government-sponsored newspapers, and a few individuals regarded as loyal to the colonial regime. Any attempts to promote national consciousness outside those limited arenas must be quashed.

"Looking relations" between the coloniser and the colonised are characterised by the authoritarian, imperial gaze which, as Bhabha remarks (1983,

[1] For details of the activities of the PID and Dutch political intelligence in general, see Poeze 1994.

23), identifies the colonial subject as 'a fixed reality which is at once "other" and yet entirely knowable and visible'. The "house of glass" of the title of the fourth volume of the tetralogy is Pangemanann's metaphor of surveillance for the way in which he seeks to engineer, mark and machine his subjects, the movers of the emerging nationalist movement. His technique is to research exhaustively every detail of the lives and movements of those subjects so that he has them metaphorically contained in a glass house on his desk. They are thus objectified so that he can observe and control them, he himself being unseen but all-knowing. In his own words, his job is

> nothing other than to monitor closely my own people for the sake of the security and perpetuity of the Government. As I have been doing, I will continue to put all Natives... into a house of glass which I will place on my desk....That is my task - to watch every movement that occurs in that house of glass ... The Indies must not change. It must be preserved as it is forever.[1] (RK, 56)

Roskies (1993, 24) has remarked on the resemblance between Pangemanann's metaphorical house of glass and Bentham's literal panopticon, which the latter defined as 'a mill for grinding rogues honest, and idle men industrious.'(Stephen 1950, 201) The panopticon, a prison building designed so that all prisoners could be under supervision at all times, is the perfect metaphor for the type of control Pangemanann is required to exert in the interest of the colonial power: he himself must be all-knowing yet unobtrusive, displaying a combination of detachment and close attentiveness while his subjects need to be under continual supervision yet unaware of the fact.

To see without being seen both confirms one's separation from the world under observation, and affirms one's position of power. In his study of systems of control in colonial Egypt, Mitchell (1988, 175) comments that Lord Cromer ('one of the most famously redoubtable of British imperial proconsuls', according to Said {1994, 239}), whose role was to report to the Foreign Office on

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[1] tak lain terus mengawasi ketat sebangsaku demi keselamatan dan kelangsungan hidup Gubermen. Semua Pribumi ... semua telah dan akan kutempatkan dalam sebuah rumah kaca dan kuletakkan di meja kerjaku...Itulah pekerjaanku, mengawasi semua gerak-gerik seisi rumah kaca itu. Begitulah juga yang dikehendaki Gubernur Jendral. Hindia tidak boleh berubah - harus dilestarikan.

the administration of British colonialism in Egypt between 1883 and 1907, 'envisaged the ideal colonial official in the form of an omnipotent yet silent school teacher: "he was to exercise supreme authority over his pupil, and at the same time ... his authority was to be unfelt."'

Pangemanann has very compelling personal reasons for wanting the respective positions of observer and observer in the panopticon to remain intact, asking himself,

> Why did the promise of self-government fill me with such dread and anxiety? Was it because I knew only too well that under self-government the Native organisations would sit on Government councils, would be involved in law-making courts and other control mechanisms? This would become a reality if they were really committed to self-government. My house of glass would be vacated and maybe I would end up being the new occupant. I'd been the observer all this time, but the situation could be reversed and I'd become the observed.[1] (RK, 337)

Pangemanann relies on the "one-way" nature of the gaze for his authority; any suggestion that it could become a "mutual gaze" would fracture that authority and, by extension, colonial power.

Although the metaphor of the house of glass is only invoked by Pangemanann, the method of control used in the panopticon operates elsewhere and at other levels in the tetralogy.

Minke becomes a protege of the de la Croix family. Keen to follow the example set by Snouck Hurgronje, Herbert wants to make Minke his own, to redefine him as the face of the future of the Indies. He is prepared to put his career on the line in the interest of his "hobby", the study of educated Natives. He even hires a former police officer, Jan Tantang (*aka* Babah Kong), to keep a strict surveillance on Minke's every movement. Like Pangemanann, Herbert needs

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[1] Mengapa janji berpemerintahan sendiri membuat hatiku begini sendu dan sesak? Adakah karena aku terlalu percaya pada pengetahuanku, dengan pemerintahan sendiri organisasi-organisasi Pribumi akan menduduki dewan-dewan pemerintahan, pembikinan undang-undang, mahkamah-mahkamah, badan-badan pengawasan? Memang tak bisa lain kalau yang dimaksudkan memang pemerintahan sendiri. *Rumah kaca*-ku akan menjadi kosong dan mungkin aku sendiri dimasukkan ke dalamnya, dan bila sampai sekarang aku jadi penonton, dengan pemerintahan sendiri salah-salah semua orang akan menonton aku di dalamnya.

detachment yet close supervision, and although his purpose is ostensibly in Minke's interests, his method of operation reflects a desire for control and manipulation. In Herbert's view Minke is, in Boehmer's words (1993, 269), 'open to mastery, available for use, for husbandry, for numbering, branding, cataloguing, description or possession'. In a sense, also, de la Croix displays the paternalistic arrogance identified by Said (1994, xx), which decrees 'that independence is to be wished for them so long as it is the kind of independence *we* approve of.' Herbert approves of the "educated native" and Pangemanann patently does not, but the method of control they use, because they both operate within the imperial-colonial dialectic, is the same. Minke occupies Herbert's "house of glass" just as he later occupies Pangemanann's.

Governor-General van Heutsz also erects a metaphorical panopticon in which he can watch the movements of his favourite educated Native, Minke. Van Heutsz's patronage of Minke is undoubtedly inspired by the ulterior motive of needing to keep a close watch on his movements. Careful observation of Minke will give van Heutsz an insight into the aspirations of all educated Natives - it will make them "readable". His agenda becomes transparent when he encourages Minke to move to Buitenzorg , 'so it's easier to reach you'.[1] (JL, 222)

Pangemanann acknowledges that the "house of glass" method is used by others as a method of exerting control when he says of Governor-General Van Limburg Stirum's admiration of Semaun:

> Just as it had been with Dr Snouck Hurgronje, and with the Resident of Bojonegoro, and with me also, he wanted to adopt that boy as his own private object of scientific study. Snouck Hurgronje had Achmad Djadjdiningrat, de la Croix and van Heutsz had Minke, and I myself had Marco and Siti Soendari.[2] (RK, 340)

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[1] Biar Tuan Minke mudah dapat dicapai

[2] seperti halnya dengan residen Bojonegoro, seperti halnya dengan diriku, ia hendak ambil bocah itu untuk dirinya sendiri sebagai bahan pengamatan ilmiah. Achmad Djajadiningrat untuk Snouck Hurgronje, Minke untuk De la Croix dan Jendral Van Heutsz dan Marco serta Siti Soendari untuk diriku sendiri...

Ultimately, however, despite his self-projection as part of 'the brains behind the Netherlands Indies'(*otak kekuasaan Hindia Belanda*, RK, 84), Pangemanann is as much a product of the system he is helping to reinforce as he is a producer of it. Like the other products of the colonial situation - the colonised who challenges the colonial hegemony (Minke), the liberal Dutch (Magda Peters, the de la Croix family and Hendrik Frischboten), the *Indo* (Annelies Mellema, Robert Mellema, Robert Suurhof) and the *nyai* - Pangemanann must try to find a place for himself in the colonial-imperial dialectic, and in the process he undergoes a crisis in self-image.

Displaced Persons

Minke

When Minke introduces himself on the first page of *Bumi manusia* he is an eighteen year old product of colonialism, manufactured by the colonial situation, in particular by the education system offered to a select few *priyayi* children. While Pramoedya has nothing but praise for the Dutch colonial education system, the way in which he portrays Minke's condition and its development can be seen to illustrate Memmi's assertion (1965, 105-106) that colonial education is a double edged sword: while it may rescue the Native from illiteracy, 'far from preparing the adolescent to find himself completely, school creates a permanent duality in him' and 'the memory which is assigned him is certainly not that of his people. The history which is taught him is not his own.'

The education offered to the Native elite was circumscribed by the ideology and the established canonical works of the Dutch imperial centre. The consequent frustration is obvious in Minke's case as, armed with his newly-acquired Enlightenment ideals, he seeks to convert a society which it seems is simply not ready to be converted. By the same token, however, his Dutch education makes Minke a potential threat to the stability of the colonial regime: the "educated Native" is of great concern to several Governors-General and the prime subject in Pangemanann's house of glass. Pangemanann himself alludes to the commonly-held

view that giving Western education to the Natives can only result in their displacement (and all that that implies):

> It seemed there was a view abroad amongst the colonials that teaching Dutch to the Natives would cause more harm than good. Children who were taught Dutch would mature more quickly because it would broaden their horizons. They would be able to peer into the modern world without the guiding hand of a European. The result would be that they ended up out of place amongst their own people, a heron amongst the crows. They couldn't go back to being crows, but at the same time they had no real friends among the herons.[1] (RK, 139)

The duality created in Minke by his education compounds his sense of isolation from his Javanese heritage, which is a motif of the first three volumes of the tetralogy. As his world is being opened up by Western education, his ties with his Javanese roots unravel even further. His attitude towards his ethnic background is tinged with more than a little ambivalence.

Minke becomes increasingly impatient with previous generations of Javanese, who were content to constantly retrace their own footsteps. He refers to the Javanese as "uncivilised" and "misguided", explaining to his mother, 'It's just that I know things that the Javanese people don't know.'[2] (BM, 125)

He finds it difficult to reconcile his position of privilege with his feelings of irritation at the way his own people have responded to what he sees as the shining example of Europe. He is torn between the knowledge that his *priyayi* background privileges him over other Javanese boys, and an awareness of the feudal nature of that *priyayi* tradition and the backwardness of most non-*priyayi* Javanese. When he is summoned to attend his father's investiture as Regent, Minke is appalled that the same *priyayi* status which enables him to invoke *forum privilegiatum* (the

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[1] Rupa-rupanya ada kalangan kolonial yang menganggap pengajaran bahasa Belanda lebih banyak merugikan daripada menguntungkan bila diberikan pada Pribumi. Anak-anak itu menjadi lebih cepat masak, karena dapat langsung bersinggungan dengan wawasan-wawasan yang hidup di dunia yang maju. Mereka bisa menjenguk dunia besar tanpa bimbingan lagi dari seorang Eropa. Akibatnya mereka jadi unsur sumbang di tengah-tengah masyarakatnya sendiri, menjadi seekor kuntul di tengah-tengah gagak. Jadi gagak lagi dia tak bisa, tetap jadi kuntul dia tak punya teman.

[2] Sahaya hanya mengetahui yang orang Jawa tidak mengetahui.

right to be tried under the same law as Europeans) also obliges him to crawl on his knees before his father:

> What's the point of studying European science and learning, of mixing with Europeans, if in the end one has to crawl, slide along like a snail, and pay homage to some minor monarch who is probably illiterate anyway?[1] (BM, 116)

The increasing gap between Minke and his Javanese background is illustrated poignantly throughout the first two novels in exchanges between him and his mother, a conservative *priyayi* through and through. She accuses him of being a "brown Dutchman", a direct result of his Dutch education.[2] When he denies it, she reprimands him for answering back:

> 'That's a sign you're no longer Javanese, not paying heed to your elders, to those who deserve your respect, to those who are more powerful than you.'
> 'Mother, please don't punish me like this. I respect whatever is closest to being right.'
> 'Javanese bow down in submission to their elders, to those more powerful; that's how you achieve nobility of character. People must have the humility to surrender, *Gus*...'
> '...those are the misguided songs of the misguided Javanese. Those who have the humility to surrender are merely trodden underfoot, Mother.
> '...I've studied at Dutch schools for over ten years now in order to discover all this. Is it fair that you punish me for what I've learnt?'[3] (BM, 125)

Minke is operating on a different wavelength from his mother. In the spirit of rationalism, he seeks to justify his actions by pointing out that they are an effective

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[1] Apa guna belajar ilmu dan pengetahuan Eropa, bergaul dengan orang-orang Eropa, kalau akhirnya toh harus merangkak, beringsut seperti keong dan menyembah seorang raja kecil yang barangkali butahuruf pula?

[2] Nyai Ontosoroh also has cause to wonder whether she herself is 'a Dutch woman with brown skin' (*wanita Belanda berkulit coklat*, BM, 84)

[3] 'Itu tanda kau bukan Jawa lagi, tak mengindahkan siapa lebih tua, lebih berhak akan kehormatan, siapa yang lebih berkuasa.'
'Ah, bunda, jangan hukum sahaya. Saya hormati yang lebih benar.'
'Orang Jawa sujud berbakti kepada yang lebih tua, lebih berkuasa, satu jalan pada penghujung keluhuran. Orang harus berani mengalah, Gus...'
'...itulah nyanyian keliru dari orang Jawa yang keliru. Yang berani mengalah terinjak-injak, Bunda...'
'...Berbelas tahun sudah saya bersekolah Belanda untuk dapat mengetahui semua itu, Patutkah sahaya Bunda hukum setelah tahu?'
Gus is a respectful term of address by adults to boys

means to achieve his ends. His mother, on the other hand, can only use "tradition" as a justification for any given action.

Minke's decision not to follow the traditional path and become a Regent like his father is a source of pain and bewilderment to his family. When he explains to his mother that he wants to be "free", to neither rule nor be ruled, she expresses surprise that such a thing is possible. This is his cue to regale her about the achievements of the French revolution, but his enthusiasm falls on uncomprehending ears.

Minke increasingly comes to regard his writing as a vocation and, using the pseudonym of Max Tollenar, he is regularly published in the *Soerabaiaasch Nieuws.*[1] While his success in this area is a great boost to his self-confidence, it incurs the suspicion of the school principal and the hostility of his peers - especially that of Robert Suurhof, whose disdain for *pribumi* Javanese knows no bounds. Suurhof publicly exposes "Max Tollenar" as a "mere *pribumi*". In the end only one of Minke's peers will associate openly with him - Jan Dapperste, who has always tried to pass himself off as an *Indo* but who is actually *pribumi.*

Minke acknowledges that his decision to study at medical school is an unseemly career choice for a boy from a noble family:

> Children from the upper echelons of the Native Civil Service did not generally aspire to a career as a doctor, to engage in work that involved serving one's fellow human beings. They preferred to govern, to control, to fawn, and, most importantly, to be fawned upon.[2] (JL, 43)

He frequently has cause to curse what he calls the Javanese devil, the social hierarchy 'separating each Javanese from all Javanese, and all Javanese from each other, and everyone from each other.'[3] (JL, 259) He abhors the way in which the Javanese language obliges one to situate oneself on 'the complex Javanese social

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[1] The name "Max Tollenar" is an obvious allusion to Minke's idol, Max Havelaar. See chapter 2

[2] Anak-anak pembesar Pangreh Praja tak suka jadi dokter, pada pekerjaan mengabdi kemanusiaan. Mereka lebih memilih pekerjaan memerintah, menguasai, menjilat dan terutama dijilat.

[3] ...pemisah Jawa yang satu dari semua Jawa, semua Jawa dari Jawa yang satu, yang satu dari yang satu.

hierarchy'[1] (BM, 57), and 'forces people to accustom their hearts to the constant degrading of others.'[2] (ASB, 119) This social hierarchy, to Minke's great disappointment, is still accepted by the so-called liberal Regent of Serang, in whom Minke had hoped to find a supporter for his ambition to set up a mass movement among the Natives. His hopes are dashed when he is expected to crawl on his knees to meet the Regent, just as he had with his father. While Minke may have shed many of the shackles which bind him to the feudal Javanese social structure, the Regent reminds him , 'You forget that it is not whether people are educated or not, but rather what they do, what position it is that they hold. You forget that I am a Regent.'[3] (JL, 178) By now Minke realises that the sorts of reforms advocated by liberals such as Snouck Hurgronje fall far short of what he himself wants to achieve in the Indies.[4]

When his mother accuses him of being a black Dutchman in Javanese clothes, Minke gives voice to his very real sense of cultural dislocation: 'And I felt like an orphan of the modern age.'[5] (JL, 52) It is a cultural dislocation which is acknowledged by Pangemanann, who regards Minke as being neither fully European nor fully Native:

> Minke himself seemed to have become a cultural hybrid. In *Footsteps* he bent again in the direction of the Natives, while still standing firm with his European values. Yet when he worked and dealt with other Natives, he still did so as a cultural hybrid.[6] (RK, 177)

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[1] kedudukan sosial dalam tatahidup Jawa yang pelik itu.
Javanese social relations are almost always hierarchical, and the forms for showing respect toward a person of higher status than oneself are markedly elaborated. The most striking way of showing respect is linguistic. By using one form rather than another, the speaker reveals how much status distance exists between himself and the person he is addressing.

[2] orang selalu harus sampaihati menghina

[3] Kau lupa, manusia bukanlah terpelajar atau tidaknya, tetapi apa yang dikerjakannya, apa yang dijabatnya. Kau lupa aku bupati.

[4] The Regent of Serang was Achmad Djajadiningrat, who had been Snouck Hurgronje's prized experimental student during his campaign to get the sons of leading families into the European educational system. This exposure to European culture became known as the "association process", the ultimate aim of which was to develop a 'self-stimulating, efficient and progressive Indonesian society loyal to the motherland'. (van Niel 1960, 30)

[5] Memang aku sudah merasa jadi anak yatim-piatu jaman modern

[6] Minke sendiri rupanya telah menjadi peranakan di bidang kebudayaan. Dalam *Jejak langkah* untuk kepentingan perkaranya ia meliuk kembali ke arah Pribumi dengan masih tetap mengukuhi Eropa. Ia menghampiri Pribumi masih tetap sebagai peranakan kebudayaan.

Minke's sense of cultural dislocation is also announced in the tetralogy through two significant semiotic codes - clothing and language. As Gilbert and Tompkins suggest (1996, 244), choice of clothing is not always simply a matter of practical necessity or even of adornment. In post-colonial discourse it can be a loaded signifier, potentially subversive of colonial status but also possibly indicative of a divided consciousness on the part of the wearer.

When a colonised subject wears the costume of the coloniser, clothing is potentially a destabilising force. Minke is ridiculed by his peers for choosing to wear European clothing, yet it is a choice which to the colonisers signifies a dangerous blurring of the boundaries between coloniser and colonised. As Gilbert and Tompkins point out (1996, 245), 'imperialist cultures use dress to signal certain categories, patrol the boundaries between them, and so verify orders of social privilege.'

Minke frequently makes a symbolic statement through his clothing. Specifically he engages in what Gilbert and Tompkins (1996, 245) call 'cultural cross-dressing'- choosing garments that exceed, or at least test the limits of, his status within the colonial hierarchy. At his father's investiture his dress style, reflecting his own self-identification, is 'half-Javanese, half-European' (*setengah Jawa setengah Eropa*, BM, 129). After the investiture, at which he makes a big impact by acting as translator for his father, he is swamped by invitations to local social functions. He acquires almost movie-star status when he receives, and accepts, an invitation to visit the de la Croix family. On this visit he wears European clothing, much to his mother's annoyance.[1]

After his move to STOVIA Minke becomes aware from the outset of how different he is from those around him. They parody the "civilising intent" of his European-style clothing; they taunt him for being a *Londo Godong*, a derisory term

[1] Referring to the adoption by Natives of European clothing, style and idiosyncrasies, Memmi (1965, xiv) comments, 'This...is what all colonized try to do before they pass on to the stage of revolt.'

for a Javanese who has been elevated to the status of a Dutchman. As Gilbert and Tompkins point out (1996, 247), 'Even in situations which seem to present a simple case of acculturation, there is always a disjunctive gap between western clothes and their colonised wearers.' Mrazek (1997, 121) points out that a Native who was not dressed as a Native posed a dilemma for the colonial power:

> This situation gave rise to a troubling question among the Dutch ruling class. If a "native" dresses as he wishes, will he still be a "native"? Where will he belong? There was no niche for such a "native" on any known map.

A major transformation is announced symbolically in the very last sentence of *Jejak langkah* (464), when Minke is embarking on his exile:

> And I didn't notice that I was barefoot.[1]

Although the occasion is one of humiliation for Minke, his barefoot status is compellingly symbolic of his movement towards becoming one of "the people".

Like his choice of clothing, Minke's search for an appropriate language in which to express his ideas is doubly significant on a post-colonial reading. It both symbolises his quest for self-identity and heralds a new way of trespassing on the coloniser's space.

The title of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's influential text in the field of post-colonial literary theory, *The empire writes back*, clearly indicates the authors' major focus: 'the process by which the language, with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority, has been wrested from the dominant European culture'. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989, 7-8) This project remains very influential, although it has been challenged by other theorists.[2] A large body of post-colonial criticism has focussed on the issue of language, specifically the ways in

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[1] Tak aku sadari kakiku tak berselop.
The Indonesian is actually somewhat ambiguous: 'tak berselop' may mean that he was not wearing "selop", the slippers usually associated with *priyayi* dress, but was wearing some other form of footwear, which would symbolise a renunciation of his *priyayi* tradition but not necessarily assimilation with the barefoot custom of non-*priyayi* Natives. I, like Max Lane, have interpreted 'tak berselop' to mean 'not wearing any footwear', symbolising a more profound transformation.

[2] Mishra and Hodge (1991, 400), for example, using the case of Salman Rushdie as a parable, make the claim that 'in the final analysis post-colonial writers who write in the language of the Empire are marked off as traitors to the cause of a reconstructive post-colonialism'.

which the language of the coloniser has been appropriated and adapted by the former colonial subjects and hurled back to the imperial centre.

Literature in post-colonial Indonesia has never been written in Dutch; "writing back" in the language of the imperial centre is thus not a strategy of resistance in these works. Indeed, in a field of criticism which is beset by debate and controversy over what can properly be "counted as" post-colonial, in some quarters Indonesian literature may well be disallowed as constituting a legitimate form of post-colonial discourse.[1] However, as Gilbert and Lo suggest (1998, 6), the process of formulating, prior to decolonisation, a new national language in the East Indies can reveal a great deal about the historical contingencies of the time.

Although, as Day and Foulcher point out (1998, 2), writing "back" in Malay, a language with indigenous roots, must be differentiated from a process of "writing back" in the colonial language, I believe that the appropriation and reformulation of the Malay language by the nationalist movement can properly be read as a form of "writing back" to the imperial centre. The significance of appropriating, adapting and selecting a suitable form of the language to suit their own needs is expressed succinctly by Minke in a letter from exile in Ambon:

> Public organisations in the Indies will only grow and flourish if they use non-Government Malay...The more Malay distances itself from the way it is taught in the Government schools, from the feudal circles in general, the more democratic it becomes, the more it becomes a truly invigorating means of communication, a free language for a free people.[2] (RK, 169)

Whatever potential uses the colonial government had envisaged for Malay, it is highly unlikely that they ever imagined it being 'a free language for a free people'.

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[1] See Gilbert and Tompkins 1996, 3-4

[2] Hanya dengan bahasa Melayu bukan Gubermen, dan di antara orang-orang bebas, tidak dengan orang-orang jabatan negeri, organisasi umum di Hindia akan bisa menjadi besar dan subur. Bahasa Melayu, semakin jauh dari pengajaran Gubermen, semakin jauh dari orang-orang feodal, semakin demokratis dan menjadi alat perhubungan yang nyaman, memang bahasa bebas untuk orang bebas. "Government Malay" was also known as "Van Ophuysen Malay", after the role of Professor Van Ophuysen, inaugural professor of Malay at Leiden University, in the move to standardisation of the language.

The process of institutionalising Malay - or, to paraphrase Maier (1993, 48), a form of 'what we now call "Malay"'- as the lingua franca of the region bore all the hallmarks of careful engineering and homogenising associated with other mechanisms of colonial control. The East Indies Company had authorised the publication of Malay grammar books (by Werndly and Marsden), a dictionary and a Malay translation of the Bible in the early nineteenth century. (Siregar 1996, 8) In the 1820s, after the transfer of control of the Indies back to the Dutch following Raffles' brief rule, a knowledge of Malay by civil servants symbolised a degree of compassion for their native subjects (and gave them the promise of an early promotion). As Maier points out, administration, bureaucracy and print required standardisation, and from the late nineteenth century a concerted effort was made to construct a standard, authorised Malay for these purposes, as well as for educating the Natives. Eventually, what was settled on as "real", "standard" Malay was that of Riau and Malacca - but in practice a variety of forms of "Malay" continued to proliferate.

The language of instruction in village primary schools was Malay, a strategy which effectively kept them "in their place" as future farmers and labourers. The Balai Pustaka publishing house was established by the colonial government in part to promote the publishing of popular literature in Malay. Its support of writers wanting to write in Malay, while it served to increase the status of the language and to give young writers a non-European voice in which to express themselves, was underpinned by strict censorship.

While there was by no means general agreement about the nature of colonial language policy, there was certainly a need to find a balance between fostering and standardising Malay as a lingua franca and making sure that Dutch, a symbol of Western science and learning, lost none of its prestige in the colony. Urban primary schools such as the HIS (*Hollandsch Inlandsch School*), high schools such as MULO (*Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs*) and AMS (*Algemene*

Middelbare School)[1] and a number of tertiary institutions were established, offering instruction in Dutch to a limited and carefully selected number of children of the elite. Among other things, this was designed to strengthen Dutch economic enterprise in the Indies.

For the first three decades of the twentieth century the strategy of promoting Dutch as a language of prestige and as a tool for accessing Western civilisation (what Maier {1993, 58} calls "Dutchification") was very successful:

> (T)hroughout the first twenty-five years of the twentieth century, the Indonesians repeatedly demanded greater opportunities for their children to study (Dutch). As a consequence Dutch assumed an increasingly important position in Indonesian society. It became not merely a precondition for furthering one's Western education but also for getting highly paid jobs. Even apart from this, to be able to speak Dutch gradually became the mark of belonging to a new upper class in Indonesian society. (Alisjahbana 1976, 37)

However, since the first decade of the century nationalist groups had been searching for an appropriate language in which to express their ideals. As more and more literature began to be published in Malay, and it became the language of newspapers, Malay began to be seen as potentially a signifier of Indies nationalism. Ki Hajar Dewantara (Suwardi Suryadiningrat), founder of the Taman Siswa schools, began to intimate in 1916 that the use of Malay could be a strategy of resistance, invoking emotive expressions like 'fostering the solidarity of the nation' in his call for Malay to be used as a language of instruction in all schools, which was also taken up by other non-government schools. The politicisation of Malay continued with its adoption as the language of Indonesian nationalism by the PNI in 1927.[2] In 1928 Malay, transformed into *Bahasa Indonesia*, was foreshadowed as the national language of Indonesia in what later came to be called the *Sumpah Pemuda*. In the same way as the languages of the colonisers elsewhere have been transformed and

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[1] HIS was a Dutch-medium school for the indigenous elite, MULO was a Dutch-medium junior secondary school and AMS was a Dutch-medium senior secondary school.

[2] Initially called the *Perserikatan Nasional Indonesia*, the party changed its name to PNI (*Partai Nasional Indonesia*) in 1928, when Sukarno became the first chairman. This party was arguably the first radically nationalist party in the Indies, calling as it did for complete independence. (See Penders 1977, 302-8)

modified to suit the needs of the newly independent country, then used as a tool for writing back to the centre, Malay, the authorised, approved and carefully controlled lingua franca of the Dutch colonial power, was adapted and transformed into *Bahasa Indonesia*, and used in a way the Dutch had not foreseen - namely as a symbol of Indies unity and as a marker of nationalist commitment.

In Pramoedya's tetralogy, this process of transformation is symbolised through Minke's changing attitude towards the issue of which language he will write in. Initially the Dutch language, which in the text is frequently stressed by the addition of *dalam Belanda* ('in Dutch'), symbolises for him all that is modern and rational in the world, and it is a source of great pride to Magda Peters that her pupil writes so fluently in her native language. Nyai, Jean, Kommer and Minke's mother, however, berate him for only writing in Dutch.

Throughout the tetralogy, Minke's attitude towards Malay is used as a sort of litmus test, measuring the extent of his commitment to nationalist ideals. Initially, Malay is almost beyond the pale for him. He sees it as appropriate that his inferiors address him in Malay but he finds it irritating that he must use Malay with Jean because the latter flatly refuses to learn Dutch. Moreover he is exasperated by Jean's insistence that he write in Malay, and declares that 'Malay readers are mainly uneducated European half-castes, plantation and factory workers'[1] (ASB, 49), to which Jean retorts, 'You don't even know your own people!'[2] (ASB, 50) Jean goes on to remind Minke of his debt to Kommer, who translated and published Minke's articles in Malay, thus inspiring the sympathy of the Malay-speaking public for Minke's legal battles. Without Kommer's translations, Jean points out, none of his own people would have known about his plight.

Kommer too, aware that language choice is an overtly political act, urges Minke to write in Malay, and thus symbolically declare his love for his country. If only he were prepared to write in Malay, Kommer tells him, his work

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[1] Pembaca Melayu paling-paling hanya Peranakan Eropa tak terpelajar di perkebunan dan pabrik.

[2] Kau tak kenal bangsamu sendiri.

would be read in the *kampung*s, the expanded readership ensuring a much wider dissemination of his views. Minke's love-hate relationship with Kommer parallels the fluctuating affiliations of the nationalist movement with Dutch and Malay as alternative means of communication. While Minke riles against what he perceives as Kommer's overly dogmatic and aggressive manner, he nonetheless has to acknowledge that Kommer is right in his assertion that, 'Sooner or later native people will become very disillusioned by the Dutch colonial press, and they will be forced to write in their own language.'[1] (ASB, 112)

Eventually, through a rather painful process of reflection, Minke comes to understand what Kommer, Jean and Nyai have been telling him. He realises the inherent paradox in his wish to defend the oppressed peasants by writing newspaper articles in Dutch, and can finally see that Malay is a truly democratic language - it 'fits perfectly the aims of the French revolution.'[2] (ASB, 184) Again, this surely does not fit with the colonial government's vision of the place of Malay in the colony.

Pangemanann

Pangemanann occupies a significant site in the post-colonial landscape. Rushdie (cited in Mishra and Hodge 1991, 400) suggests that 'the Empire would not have lasted a week without such collaborators among the colonised people.' Memmi (1965, 16) describes those in Pangemanann's position in the following terms:

> The representatives of the authorities, cadres, policemen, etc, recruited from among the colonised, form a category of the colonised which attempts to escape from its political and social condition. But in so doing, by choosing to place themselves in the coloniser's service to protect his interests exclusively, they end up by adopting his ideology, even with regard to their own values and their own lives.

Sartre (in Memmi, xxvi) adds,

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[1] Pada suatu kali orang-orang Pribumi akan dikecewakan oleh koran-koran Belanda kolonial itu, dan terpaksa menulis dalam bahasanya sendiri.

[2] tepat dengan kehendak Revolusi Prancis

> Borne along by the colonialist apparatus, they do every day in reality what they condemn in fantasy, for all their actions contribute to the maintenance of oppression. They will change nothing and will serve no one, but will succeed only in finding moral comfort in malaise.

As Roskies says (1993, 22), Pangemanann's role in the imperial-colonial dialectic is 'a paralysing contradiction'.

Pangemanann's displacement inheres in the contradictory forces which control his life. He is a high-ranking official of the colonial government, yet he is a *pribumi*; he recommends and implements Minke's exile, yet his admiration for him is boundless; he derives a great deal of pleasure in oppressing the enemies of the government, but the success of his endeavours fills him with disgust at the same time. Of course Pangemanann is in a sense doubly displaced, because even before his involvement with the colonial government he was taken away from the land of his birth and brought up in France.

Pangemanann's attitude to his position is similar to Minke's ambivalence towards his *priyayi* heritage. Just as Minke confesses that invoking the privileges of his elite status gives him a great deal of pleasure, Pangemanann admits that, while he abhors the oppression inherent in the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, the act of oppressing can bring a great deal of pleasure: 'It makes you feel more important and more powerful.'[1] (RK, 179) In the same breath Pangemanann can say, 'Colonials are the same everywhere. Racial hatred is their guide in life', and admit 'And I had the same attitude towards anyone who was not Menadonese or European.'[2] (RK, 200)

A further irony is that, while Pangemanann is observing the "educated Natives" in his house of glass, he himself is at the mercy of others and in fact wields very little real power. He must do as his superiors tell him or risk losing his

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[1] Rasa-rasanya diri menjadi lebih penting dan lebih berkuasa

[2] Orang-orang kolonial di seluruh dunia sama saja, kebencian rasial merupakan pedoman hidup. Juga aku sendiri terhadap umumnya bukan orang Menado atau bukan Eropa.

position. He reflects, 'What a roller coaster ride our emotions are on, and all due to forces beyond our own control.'[1] (RK, 81)

Pangemanann has everything to lose; Minke has nothing to lose. As Sartre says (in Memmi 1965, xxix):

> A people's misfortune will become its courage; it will make, of its endless rejection by colonialism, the absolute rejection of colonisation.

Who has the real power?

The liberal Dutch

The liberal Dutch in the tetralogy - Magda Peters, the de la Croix family and Hendrik Frischboten - are displaced because they don't "belong" in the colony. They are simply "out of place". Their place is in Holland, where they can contribute legitimately to democratically sanctioned ethical debates about colonialism, not in the colony itself where they are forced to live by the rules of colonialism.

These people are as much the victims of cultural dislocation as the colonised subjects like Minke or the assimilated subjects like Pangemanann. Like the latter, their lives are contained in a contradiction. They are trying to renounce colonial ideology while continuing to live within, and benefit from, its actual relationships. As Maarten Nijman says of Magda Peters,

> She and her kind don't want to know about all the limitations that exist in the Indies. Only disaster will befall those who dare fight against, let alone contravene, those limitations.[2] (BM, 289)

At the same time, their privileged position as Europeans periodically forces them to deny their own liberal humanist tendencies. Magda Peters, for example, refuses to let Minke talk about Snouck Hurgronje's theory of association in class, declaring:

> Such subjects may not yet be discussed at H.B.S. school. It's up to you if you want to discuss them outside school. Such matters are the

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[1] Betapa cepatnya perasaan turun-naik tanpa atas kemauan sendiri.

[2] Dia dan golongannya tidak mau tahu tentang banyaknya pembatasan di Hindia. Celaka orang yang berani menentang apalagi melanggar pembatasan.

> affair of the Queen, the Netherlands Government, the Governor-General and the Netherlands Indies Government. If you have a desire to find out more, it's best you do so outside school.[1] (BM, 206)

Herbert de la Croix's liberalising drive is tempered by his conviction that 'the Native psychology hasn't yet developed as far as that of the European, too often their judgment is clouded by sexual passion.'[2] (BM, 216-217)

In the end, their situation is unsustainable: they are plagued by guilt and powerlessness. While their aims, as summed up by Miriam, are noble:

> let's work together to do whatever is best for Java, the Indies, Europe and the world. Let's fight all the evils of Europe, Java, the Indies and the world, emulating the struggles of the great humanists...'[3] (ASB, 97)

the obstacles to achieving them are enormous, and the greatest is the suspicion of their fellow (accepting) colonisers. As Nijman says to Minke, radical liberals such as Magda Peters are dangerous because they want to change the situation in the Indies which is already 'consolidated, orderly, secure, tranquil.'[4] (BM, 290) The liberal Dutch are a threat to the security of the prevailing hegemony; they thwart the coloniser's need for the country to be "readable". Essentially they are in an 'impossible historical situation'. (Memmi 1965, 39) Siding fully with the native population would entail betraying their Europeanness. (Foulcher 1993c, 227) They have little power to influence the fundamental dynamics of colonialism, and as Minke suggests, their rejection of colonialism does not release them from the collective responsibility they share by virtue of being citizens of the colonising

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[1] Pokok seperti itu belum boleh dihadapkan di depan sekolah H.B.S. Terserah kalau di luar sekolah. Ini adalah urusan Sri Ratu, Pemerintah Nederland, Gubernur Jendral dan Pemerintah Kolonial Hindu Belanda. Sebaiknya kalau ada keinginan para siswa mencari sendiri di luar sekolah.

[2] Kejiwaan Pribumi belum berkembang setinggi Eropa; terlalu mudah hilang pertimbangannya yang baik terdesak oleh rangsang berahi.

[3] ...mari kita bekerjasama melakukan apa saja yang baik untuk Jawa, Hindia, Eropa dan dunia. Kita perangi bersama-sama kejahatan Eropa, Jawa, Hindia dan dunia sekaligus...sebagaimana telah dilakukan para humanis besar sebelum kita...

[4] mantap, sudah tertib, aman, sentausa

country.[1] He is aware that if the tables are turned, and the Javanese rise up against the Dutch, then his liberal Dutch friends could well become his mortal enemies.

In the colony the liberal Dutch have limited options. Magda Peters is sacked from her teaching job 'because of the pressures of some of the pupils' parents'[2] and is advised to leave the Indies. (BM, 313) Herbert de la Croix, as a form of protest at the injustice of the Amsterdam Court's decision that Annelies must be sent to Holland, resigns from his position as Assistant Resident and returns to Europe. Hendrik Frischboten is deported from the Indies, his farewell message for the exiled Minke indicating his frustration at his failure to realise his ideals:

> My greetings to Raden Mas Minke who I have been unable to defend through his insurmountable difficulties.[3] (RK, 109)

All return to their "proper place", an environment where liberal voices of protest are less threatening, an environment in which they belong.

The *Indo*s

The *Indo*s, who play a significant role in Pramoedya's fictional work, were a physical manifestation of the hybridisation resulting from the blending of cultures in the colonial environment.[4] They were in a sense doubly displaced. The *pribumi* regarded them as simply another version of white-skinned Europeans, who, if given any political clout would not hesitate in oppressing the Natives,[5] while full-blood Europeans regarded them as being a rung lower down the social ladder than themselves. The situation was complicated further when many of the *Indo*s who

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[1] see chapter 2

[2] atas desakan beberapa orangtua murid

[3] Salamku pada Raden Mas Minke yang tak dapat aku dampingi pada kesulitan-kesulitannya yang tak teratasi

[4] In *Oost Indische Spiegel* Rob Nieuwenhuys describes the *Indo* as being 'split in two'. See also Mangunwijaya, '"Manusia Gelandangan" Iwan Simatupang,' chap. in *Sastra dan Religiositas*. Mangunwijaya, however, celebrates the *Indo* status as being a manifestation of the eclectic nature of Indonesian culture: 'Sidharta, Mohammad, Jesus, but also Faust and Jocho Yamamoto are respected guests whose words will always be heeded in this country.' (1988b, 132) (Sidharta, Mohammad, Yesus, tetapi juga Faust dan Jocho Yamamoto menjadi tamu-tamu yang dihormati dan sangat didengar di negeri ini.) Ironically, a 1952 study by Van Marle showed that most so-called "Europeans" in the Dutch East Indies were in fact of mixed blood. (Cited in Maier 1993, 40)

[5] Minke observes that this is exactly what happened in the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State (JL, 365)

adopted the Indies as their home nonetheless expected to be treated as Europeans, thus alienating themselves further from both sectors of the population. In the tetralogy the *Indo*s are depicted as being motivated by resentment at their sense of powerlessness. As Minke comments, they 'resent the Native blood that flows inside them, something they were never consulted about.'[1] (JL, 365)

Minke's difficulty in finding a place for the *Indo*s in his vision of the Indies of the future has already been mentioned.[2] Yet he must acknowledge the comments by Haji Moeloek that the *Indo*s have a sort of brokering role in conveying European civilisation to the Natives.[3] (JL, 274-5) He is even forced to concede that the *Indo*s pioneered the use of Malay in the Latin script. The *Indo*s feel that these contributions to Indies society have not been given the recognition they deserve.

The *Indo*s in the tetralogy develop various strategies for dealing with their sense of displacement. Annelies, unlike the others, chooses to identify herself as Javanese, and is not particularly responsive to Minke's zealous attempts to develop a Dutch reading program for her. Although Nyai Ontosoroh believes that becoming a 'Native honoured among her own people'[4] (BM, 285) is a noble ambition for Annelies, her decision to regard herself as Javanese amounts to nothing in the face of colonial law, which regards her as the property of her Dutch father. She is removed from her country of her birth, a separation which kills her.

Her brother Robert is possessed by a hatred of the *pribumi* and is unable to reconcile himself to the fact that he has Native blood in his veins. This resentment so consumes him that he ends up living a debauched existence like his father and his death of syphilis in Los Angeles makes a mockery of his romantic ambition to become a sailor.

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[1] tidak rela dalam tubuhnya mengalir darah Pribumi tanpa semau mereka sendiri.

[2] see chapter 2

[3] Haji Moeloek seems to be based on the character of Haji Agus Salim who was not, however, an *Indo*. He was a Minangkabau who became one of the first Indonesian Islamic Modernists. For details of his life see van Niel 1960, 118-19, 134-5, 197-8 and Shiraishi 1990, 219-220, 222-231, 235-238, 260-261

[4] Pribumi terhormat di tengah-tengah bangsanya

Robert Suurhof makes it his mission to destroy any notions that the *pribumi* should have equal status to the Dutch or the *Indo*s. Lacking any legally acceptable method of doing so, he willingly becomes Pangemanann's paid henchman and sets out to get rid of Minke. He is behind the organisation of various anti-*pribumi* organisations, including the TAI (*Totaal Anti Inlanders* - Total Anti-Natives) and claims that 'everything in the Indies is decided by the *Indo*s - good and evil, black and white, what will survive and what will be destroyed, everything.'[1] (JL, 380) Yet this assertion is not matched by reality; the *Indo*'s search for a place in Indies society is shadowed by a compelling sense of powerlessness.

As a group the *Indo*s, excluded from the *Sarekat Islam* and the *Boedi Oetomo*, attempt to make their presence felt by the establishment of organisations of their own. The motto of the *Indische Partij*, "the Indies for those who make their home there", while apparently a plea for the *Indo*s to be included in Indies society, in fact disguises an agenda which is anti-Dutch and, in line with Suurhof's comment, demands not only inclusion but control. They are destined, however, to occupy the "psychological abyss" between cultures, never being fully accepted by either.

The *nyai*

Minke says of the *nyai*,

> She is not an employer although she shares a room with her "lord". She is not regarded as being of the same class as her own children. She is not Pure, not *Indo,* and, properly speaking, no longer even Native. She is like a mysterious mountain.[2] (BM, 286)

As we have seen, the *nyai's* place in Indies society is completely determined by her colonial "lord". With the best of intentions Nyai Ontosoroh would have had difficulty in mastering two languages, discovering the fruits of European learning and acquiring business acumen, without the guidance of her Dutch "husband". Once

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[1] Semua ditentukan oleh golongan Indo di Hindia ini, baik-buruk, hitam-putih, berdiri-robohnya semua ini.

[2] Dia bukan majikan biar hidup sekamar dengan tuannya. Dia tidak termasuk golongan anak yang dilahirkannya sendiri. Dia bukan Totok, bukan Indo, dan dapat dikatakan bukan Pribumi lagi. Dia adalah gunung rahasia.

she has achieved her independence from him, she is still nonetheless a wife, but not a wife, a *pribumi* but not a *pribumi*, even a woman but not a woman. Where does she fit in? Her ultimate response to her sense of displacement is to leave the Indies forever.

Whatever the fate of the individual *nyai*, it is inextricably bound up with the dynamics of colonialism. The very status of being a *nyai* involves displacement from her family, yet the space into which she is moved is uncertain and insecure. If her "husband" throws her out, she is simply doubly displaced, as she can never return to the bosom of her family.

Hybridisation

Originally coined to indicate the result of inter-breeding between different species - specifically the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar (Young 1995, 6) - the word "hybrid" in later use described the offspring of humans of different races. The word resonates with echoes of its original meaning. As Young points out (1995, 9),

> The use of the term "hybridity" to describe the offspring of humans of different races implied...that the different races were different species...

Huxley argued for the use of the term "mongrel", as opposed to "hybrid", to describe the offspring resulting from breeding between races, rather than species. The term "hybrid" persisted, however, and was generally perceived to be a degradation of humanity, those 'rejected by nature'. (Knox, cited in Young 1995, 15) Hybridity was perceived as ultimately leading to degeneration.

Hybridity first came to be seen as a virtue in the late nineteenth century, when the English began to define themselves as hybrid as a statement of rivalry against the self-professed Teutonic purity of the Germans. Herbert Spencer later held up Britain as an example of a society that had 'progressed through racial amalgamation'. (Young 1995, 17)

In the post-colonial era the notion of "hybridity" has been refocussed to refer to a cultural phenomenon. However, as Young points out, it can imply both disjunction and fusion. Using Bakhtin's notions of organic and intentional hybridity as a model, Young suggests a dialectical model for cultural interaction. Organic hybridity, which is unintentional and unconscious, will tend towards fusion - the creation of a new form which can be set against the old form. Intentional hybridity on the other hand is contestatory and makes for the setting of cultural differences against each other. It produces no new form but rather what Bhabha calls 'raceless chaos', which is heterogeneous, discontinuous and constantly changing. Intentional hybridity is a political category; it is potentially divisive and undermining.

Applying the notion of intentional hybridity to colonialism, Bhabha (1985, 154) defines it as representing the moment at which the discourse of colonial authority loses its grip on authority and meaning. Previously denied knowledges are then allowed to enter into the discourse, and imperialist culture is deprived not only of its authority but also of its "authenticity".

In *Burung-burung manyar* Teto's (organic) hybridity is constituted as a site of resistance. He eventually invokes a form of intentional hybridity as a means of challenging both the authority of Dutch colonialism and the feudalism of his Javanese heritage, and in the process breaks down the binarial categories of coloniser-colonised, oppressor-oppressed and East-West.

Teto discovers by the end of the novel that his *Indo* status can be a cause for celebration, that hybridity has the potential to enrich the new nation. However throughout most of the story his "difference" brings with it a sense of dislocation, of not really belonging. As Soenardi comments (1981), he is 'a character whose soul is divided, who feels like a foreigner both among his own kind, and among strangers.'[1]

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[1] suatu tokoh yang terpecah jiwanya, yang bukan saja menjadi asing di kalangan sini, tapi juga asing di kalangan sono.

Mangunwijaya himself suggests (1986c, 104) that during the revolution, and perhaps even today, the whole population could be classified as *Indo*:

> Our inclinations were not pure Javanese, pure Moluccan, pure Batak, etc, but we were all Indo. The Indo has a fractured understanding of the realities of life and culture; moreover he is alienated. Not really sure of himself, let alone the world around him. We were all like that.[1]

Teto's position of being caught between two worlds, and not feeling at home in either, is symbolised in the way he is addressed at the Mangkunegaran palace, where he is called *Raden Mas Sinyo*, a combination of the Javanese form of address for a Javanese boy of noble descent and the colloquial *sinyo*, an appellation for an *Indo* boy. In his translation of *Burung-burung manyar*, Hunter (1991, 13) renders *Raden Mas Sinyo* as 'Little Prince Dutch Boy'. The fact that neither form of address sits happily with Teto indicates both his scorn for the revered status accorded to the *priyayi* and his ambivalence about the Dutch blood in his veins. He describes going to the palace as 'torture'(*siksaan*), and the term *Raden Mas Sinyo* as 'nonsense'(*omong kosong*). (BBM, 6)

At high school in Semarang Teto is further displaced on account of his pro-Dutch views:

> Perhaps there were other students like myself, but they were shrewd enough to hide their true feelings, as I did. But I was beset by a great sadness at having different sympathies from those of my friends. I felt like a pariah, like an outcast.[2] (BBM, 26)

He goes on,

> contrary to the sheep-like conformism of the rest of the population, I continued to hope that the Dutch would return.[3] (BBM, 28)

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[1] Selera kita sudah bukan Jawa murni, Maluku murni, Batak murni, dan sebagainya, tetapi kita semua kaum Indo. Masyarakat Indo adalah masyarakat yang dalam penghayatan realita hidup dan kebudayaannya terbelah; lebih dari itu, *alienated*. Setengah asing terhadap diri sendiri, apalagi terhadap situasi dan keadaan sekelilingnya. Demikianlah kita semua.

[2] Barangkali ada lainnya juga yang seperti aku, tetapi pastilah ia cukup lihay untuk menyembunyikan perasaannya. Seperti aku juga. Tetapi aku sungguh merasa betapa sedihnya punya simpati yang jelas bukan simpati kawanan. Serasa paria terkucil.

[3] melawan segala arus masyarakat kambing, aku tetap mengharapkan Belanda datang lagi.

As a citizen of the newly declared Republic, his role in the revolution should be to take up arms against the colonial power's attempt to reclaim its former territory. Instead Teto opts for the KNIL, for "the other side". Mangunwijaya himself says of Teto:

> My character may not prove himself popular through his actions. But those actions derived from a certain conviction (which may well differ from the convictions of those around him).[1] (Mangunwijaya 1981b)

However, Teto's "conviction" is not born out of genuine commitment to the Dutch cause. Because his motives for joining the KNIL derive largely from intense hatred of the Japanese, he is frequently beset by self-doubt, enhancing his sense of displacement. This in turn is intensified by the realisation that by opting to join KNIL he has immediately put a gulf between himself and the girl he loves, who is working for the Republican cause. He himself admits that 'since my parents vanished from my life I was frequently plagued by self-doubt and confusion about almost everything .'[2] (BBM, 114)

Teto's "difference" is also indicated through the way others view him. It is not only in the palace circle where Minke is called *sinyo*; Verbruggen uses the term too. (BBM, 69) Much later in the story, after he has befriended Mr Brinkley, the American ambassador, the latter confides in Teto about his views of "Eastern" nations. The derogatory nature of his comments suggests that he does not think of Teto as part of the "Eastern races" which he is maligning:

> ...most Eastern peoples have to be terrorised in some way, just like my adders..... it's no use just asking them nicely to do something. If you give them your heart, you'd better watch out; they'll want your other organs as well....they're a nation of coolies, and you've got to treat them like coolies.[3] (BBM, 167)

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[1] Tokoh ceritera saya mungkin memang kurang popular dalam tindakan-tindakannya. Tetapi ia berbuat demikian dengan suatu keyakinan tertentu (yang bisa berlainan dengan keyakinan orang-orang di sekitarnya).

[2] Tidak hanya kadang-kadang aku dijangkiti rasa bimbang tentang arti segala sikap dan tingkahlaku selama ini, sejak Mama dan Papa lenyap dari kehidupanku

[3] ...orang Timur memang harus diteror seperti yang kukerjakan pada adder-adder ini...orang-orang daerah samudera dan pulau-pulau di sudut dunia Selatan ini tidak dapat diajak berbaik-baik saja. Coba mereka diberi hati, aduh bukan cuma hati yang diambil, tetapi jantungnya juga...ini bangsa kuli. Harus dijadikan kuli.

When Teto tells Mr Brinkley that he is Javanese, the latter is amazed, saying that he might have picked him for Dutch, or English, or Russian - but never Javanese. (BBM, 168)

Teto's feeling of estrangement from the country of his birth is manifested by his frequent irate outbursts, against the Republican movement and its leaders, against the soldiers under his control, whom he denounces as untrustworthy (*tidak pernah dapat dipercaya,* BBM, 70), and against the Indonesian race as a whole, which he scorns for being stupid (*tolol,* BBM, 186) and 'possessing a coolie mentality'(*bermental kuli,* BBM, 123). This disillusion culminates with him asking the plaintive question (BBM, 195), 'Have I distanced myself too much from my own people?'[1] As the use of the reflexive verb 'distanced myself' implies, much of Teto's displacement has been the result of his own actions. This is also suggested by Mangunwijaya, who describes Teto as '"a wild animal" who has exiled himself from his own milieu.[2] (1986c, 103-4) While his *Indo* status has contributed to that displacement, he is not merely a victim of circumstances but in some ways has martyred himself, both to his conviction that Indonesia is not ready for independence, and to his intense hatred of the Japanese.

Globalisation

Mangunwijaya's idealised "post-Indonesian" generation in *Burung-burung rantau*, despite bringing a promise of 'human community and human liberation' are paradoxically displaced by the post-colonial pull towards globalisation and integration. They have no real sense of where they belong at either the global or local level; despite Mangunwijaya's best intentions of recuperating a new broadly-based humanitarianism in this novel, these characters are victims of the generic tendencies of globalisation, rather than champions of its inclusiveness. By Mangunwijaya's definition, globalisation should mean that they belong everywhere; these characters belong nowhere.

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[1] Apakah aku sudah keterlaluan menjauhkan diri dari bangsaku?

[2] "binatang jalang" yang membuangkan diri dari kalangannya

Essentially conservative, and committed to the values of their Javanese and Menadonese ancestors, Wiranto and Yuniati find it difficult to come to terms with much of the behaviour and world view of their children. What Neti assures her father are signs of "post-Indonesian-ness" Wiranto perceives as evidence of Westernisation. Neti's refusal to wear a bra, her assertions that she is not going to marry or have children and her leftist political views, Anggraini's ruthless business acumen and contempt for the rustic lifestyle of her parents, Bowo's decision to marry a Greek girl, Candra's use of English, Edi's heroin addiction - for Wiranto and Yuniati these are signs that their children have turned their backs on Indonesia and are becoming more attuned to the decadent West. As a result, they feel displaced as parents. The ever widening generation gap and the loss of any control they had over their children has made them feel "post-parental".

Anggraini's strength lies in her business acumen, Wibowo's in his scientific achievements and Candra's in his military prowess. While every soil to them is indeed as their native one, in some ways they are like the Javanese heirlooms referred to in *Burung-burung manyar*: outside their own context they seem stripped of meaning. Globalisation seems to have dehumanised, rather than enriched, these members of the Wiranto family.

By the end of the novel Neti discovers that her post-graduate studies and her internationalist outlook have done little to equip her to answer some of life's most basic questions. What is she to say, for example, to comfort the kampung mother whose only son has just been killed by a train? In the final analysis, the combined talents and achievements of Pak Barijo, Wibowo, Candra, Anggi and Wiranto amount to nothing in the face of the fundamental questions of life: Why must children live in poverty? Why did God not create a world free of suffering? What can be done to alleviate world hunger?

By this stage Neti is much less forthright and confident in her views than she was at the beginning. Her discussions with Krishnahatma about karma and maya, and with Bowo and Agatha about the technological revolution, her tentative

forays into post-graduate study and her work with the kampung children have produced more questions than answers for her. She is rendered humble in the face of the questions which 'continue to pile up'(semakin menggunung, BBR, 366) but she is told by the invisible narrator of the story that she should be 'happy that she can still ask and question things' : those who can continue to ask without finding the answers are truly happy. Despite her questions she does not lose her faith in the power of God; it remains a guiding light for her, in contrast to her siblings for whom the love of God has been replaced by a love of money, of science and of technology. Rather than broaden her perspective on the world, globalisation has ultimately forced Neti to turn more inward. Although she is projected in the novel as the face of the new "post-nationalist" Indonesia, she is in fact not able to reconcile her compassion and strongly-held religious convictions with the secularity and vulgar consumerism of her siblings.

This reading has foregrounded displacement as an effect not only of colonialism but also of the process of decolonisation and the search for a new post-colonial identity. The key characters in these novels are ultimately shaped and defined by the dynamics of colonialism. Their displacement is manifested variously in their awareness of a lack of "fit" between the world they aspire to occupy and the world they find themselves in; in their coming to terms with their own hybridity and in their struggle to find an identity for themselves in a new global culture.

The deconstruction of national history

Burung-burung manyar: deconstructing the grand narrative of the revolution

Burung-burung manyar can also be read as a manifestation of the post- colonial project of exposing absences and ambivalences in the official versions of history. Specifically it seeks to find a place for the renegade in the Indonesian Revolution, whose story has generally been glossed over because it undermines the established "truth" of authorised discourses about nationhood.

This novel is, among other things, a statement about the plurality of historical interpretation; it announces the possibility that the grand narrative may not be the only legitimate version of the past. In this novel "history" is presented as 'biography, autobiography, anecdote, tales of growing up'(Boehmer 1993, 275) rather than epic, and as such is multi-layered rather than authoritative; digressive rather than coherent.

This has sparked some lively debate among Indonesian critics, hinging upon the sacrosanct nature of the received view of the Indonesian revolution. The critic Soenardi, for example, was outraged that Diponegoro's status as a national hero is questioned in the novel (BBM, 215). (The Javanese prince Diponegoro led a fierce guerrilla struggle against the Dutch in the Java War of 1825-1830. The result was many thousands of casualties and widespread economic disruption.[1]) The novel's suggestion that Diponegoro's tactics were stupid is rejected by Soenardi who, in line with conventional wisdom in Indonesia, regards Diponegoro as 'providing the impetus and spirit for the struggle for independence'.[2]

Soenardi is taken to task for his stance by Yatim (1981b), who regards *Burung-burung manyar* as 'asserting'(*menyatakan*) the values of the revolution. He cites a comment by Mangunwijaya that 'like it or not, the writing of history is always and inevitably subjective. It always derives from a particular interpretation.'[3] Yatim's review celebrates the "blurring" of values as enhancing human experience of history.

While the novel focuses primarily on Teto's response to the process of decolonisation, it also contains what Fanon would call an "underground narrative" concerning the renegade guerrilla Samsu, the executioner in a guerrilla troop stationed at the village of Jurang Gede near Yogyakarta, just after the Dutch capture the city. Samsu's abuse of power serves to 'undermine the weaknesses of the official

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[1] An interesting account of the rebellion and the events leading up to it can be found in Penders 1977, 188-202

[2] memberi dorongan serta semangat terhadap perjuangan kemerdekaan

[3] mau tidak mau penulisan tentang sejarah selalu dan hanya bisa subyektif. Selalu di dalam suatu interpretasi.

narrative of nationalism'. (Said 1994, 329) While the young men of the village, loyal Republicans, have decided to await Soekarno's orders and take their instructions from the high command in Yogyakarta, Samsu embarks on a campaign of terror, plundering the village and murdering several villagers, ostensibly 'wiping out Colonial Army spies' (*menghajar mata-mata NICA*). (BBM, 107)

Burung-burung manyar exposes the flaws of the linear view of history and the notion of a cohesive collective understanding of "the revolution". As Fanon (1979, 131) says, the official narrative of nationalism tends to suggest that all sectors of the nation are carried along at the same speed, guided by the same light. *Burung-burung manyar* gives the lie to this, but ultimately, as Yatim suggests, the effect is to suggest that plurality of experience is a positive phenomenon, that an acceptance of heterogeneity enriches, rather than weakens, our understanding of the past and changes our view of it.

Durga Umayi - The death of rationality

> After colonialism, the modernisers said, comes rationality; that is the possibility the novel rules out. (Appiah 1991, 353)

There is evidence in *Durga Umayi*, symbolised in one of Iin's names, Ibu Pertiwi ("mother earth"), of a yearning for national wholeness, for what Boehmer (1993, 273) calls 'maternal plenitude'.[1] It is, however, a yearning which is thwarted by the realities of the post-colonial condition, in which that maternal plenitude is periodically subverted by the Durga side of Iin's personality.

In common with other post-colonial narratives[2] *Durga Umayi* gives the lie to notions of "national wholeness". This is most graphically illustrated in the split between Iin, representing the "state of the nation" at given points of time in post-Independence Indonesia, and her twin brother Brojol, who is essentialised as the

[1] The goddess Pertiwi was the protector of the earth and the name was adopted to designate "mother earth"

[2] See for example Salman Rushdie *Midnight's Children* and Ben Okri *The Famished Road*

unchanged and unchanging *rakyat.* The novel seeks to find an answer to a question posed by Mangunwijaya himself (1997b, 57):

> Is Indonesia still true and loyal to the original aims and directions of the Revolution which reached their bitter-sweet zenith at the Proclamation of Independence on 17 August 1945?[1]

In a very real sense, the Proclamation of Independence is depicted in the novel as the moment of loss of innocence: from that moment things have the potential to go awry and to become problematic. Iin has only two strategies for keeping in contact with the *rakyat* - through Kang Brojol and through the Microphone of '45. Her contact with each of them becomes less and less frequent as she becomes more and more wealthy, famous and beautiful.

An important and influential mode of post-colonial discourse, notably in Africa, has been the Negritude model which, applied to other post-colonial societies, has become known as nativism. This is a project which seeks to assert the distinctive qualities of Black (native) culture and identity, claiming for the Black (native) culture distinctive views of ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics and time-space relationships. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989, 21) Because of the impossibility of the notion of a singular authentic, essentialist pre-colonial "culture" in Indonesia, nativism has never been a feature of post-colonial writing in Indonesia.

However, while *Durga Umayi* exposes the national narrative as being fragmented and constantly in flux, and while it cannot be regarded as properly "nativist", the novel, like nativist narratives, does display a yearning for authenticity - namely the authenticity of the *rakyat*. While by the end of the novel Iin bears no trace of her pre-Independence self - thanks largely to repeated cosmetic surgery - Kang Brojol remains, as he always was, a humble farmer with humble ambitions, the victim of forces beyond his control. There is a strong sense that his is the "true story", along with those stories told by the Microphone, contrasting sharply with the fakeness and multiplicity of his twin sister.

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[1] Apakah Indonesia masih benar dan setia kepada arah haluan asli Revolusi yang pernah menemukan saat bahagia penuh pahit manis Proklamasi 17 Agustus 1945?

Durga Umayi can be read as an indictment of the failure of post-colonial Indonesia to protect the interests of the little people, represented by Kang Brojol and the Microphone. The Microphone 'has its own special wavelength which is activated by the yearnings of millions of powerless poor lowly people who suffer under colonialism, whether from outside or from within their own nation'.[1] (DU, 71) After the transfer of sovereignty, 'the loyal friend the Microphone made fewer and fewer appearances'[2] (DU, 138) despite having been her sweetheart since 10 o'clock on August 17 1945 and remaining loyal to her 'throughout all the years of suffering and sacrifice'.[3] (DU, 67) Once Iin has become a call-girl and property developer, 'co-habiting with a number of foreigners, there was even one from Beijing, and after 1966, from Nagasaki, Hongkong and Singapore'[4] (DU, 84), the Microphone no longer recognises her. Poignantly, it is the Microphone which returns at the end of the novel to utter the final prayer for the nation.

Right to the end of the novel Kang Brojol (who 'has never altered his name to give it a Spanish or American flavour'[5] {DU, 19}) is 'content to work as an insignificant farmer along with his in-laws in a dry barren arid area in the mountains.'[6] (DU, 6) Despite his poverty and humble lifestyle, he is always 'self-reliant honest respectable' (*berdikari jujur terhormat*, DU, 12). As with the Microphone, Iin's contact with her brother becomes less and less frequent as time goes by, although she periodically guiltily asks herself 'why has it been so long since she went to see her twin brother up in those limestone hills, and asked after his wife

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[1] riak gelombang khas tersendiri yang digeneratori getar-damba sekian juta manusia tak berdaya miskin dina dan menderita di bawah semua penjajahan dalam bentuk apa pun, entah dari luar maupun dari dalam bangsanya sendiri

[2] sejak Konferensi Meja Bundar sang sahabat Mikrofon tersayang sudah jarang datang

[3] selama tahun-tahun penuh penderitaan dan pengorbanan

[4] kumpul kebo dengan beberapa orang asing bahkan ada yang dari Beijing, dan kemudian sesudah 1966, dari Nagasaki, Hongkong dan Singapura

[5] nama tidak pernah direnovasi dengan gaya Spanyolan maupun Amerika

[6] puas jadi petani gurem yang ikut mertuanya di daerah pegunungan kering kersang kerontang

Niyah and Gatot and their other children, what class they were in and how were the crops going had the corn been attacked by mice or not...'[1] (DU, 73)

Thus while the novel, like *Burung-burung manyar*, deconstructs notions of a cohesive and unified post-colonial "vision" for Indonesia, at the same time it clings to another "truth" - that of an essentialised, authentic, "good" *rakyat*. Nostalgia for the essentialism represented by the Microphone underpins the narrative:

> what was once regarded as wrong is now regarded as a necessity of the age, what was once regarded as improper now must be seen as contributing to the sort of efficiency acknowledged in international circles, vacillating between the message of the Microphone of 45 Pegangsaan Timur Street, which hasn't been heard for ages, and the strategies adopted by people everywhere if they want to be rich, powerful and in tune with the modern world.[2] (DU, 101)

In many ways this resonates with Mangunwijaya's own ideological position, his identification with the disadvantaged and the marginalised, his defence of the underdog, and his championing of egalitarian concerns.[3]

The yearning for the "authentic" *rakyat* in *Durga Umayi* is paralleled by a yearning for a female (read, "national") wholeness, personified in the nurturing, life-giving mother earth (Ibu Pertiwi) figure. The nurturing motif is manifested through frequent references to the most obvious life-giving symbol, Iin's breasts. She ceased to feel jealous of her brother's freedom when she was blessed at puberty with 'a spellbinding pair of tomatoes'[4] (DU, 6), which henceforth become the source of much of the 'mysterious power'[5] of her gender. (DU, 7) It is at this time also that

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[1] mengapa sudah lama tidak menengok abang kembar-dampitnya di udik pegunungan kapur sana, dan bertanya bagaimana istrinya Niyah dan Gatot dan anak-anaknya yang lain, sudah kelas berapa dan bagaimana apakah jagungnya diserang tikus apa tidak...

[2] yang dulu dianggap keliru kini dianggap keharusan zaman, yang dulu dianggap tidak senonoh sekarang perlu dilihat sebagai efisiensi yang sudah diakui internasional, terombang-ambing antara pesan panggilan mikrofon Pegangsaan timur 56 yang sudah lama sekali tidak muncul, dan teknik praktis apa adanya seperti yang dilakukan orang di mana-mana bila ingin kaya dan kuasa, sejajar dengan dunia maju

[3] For a discussion of Mangunwijaya's ideological position, see Rae 1993 and Paterson 1985. See also Mangunwijaya 1988a and Mangunwijaya 1987a

[4] sepasang buah tomat penuh sapta pesona wisata

[5] kekuasaan pesona apa entah namanya

her father gives her a new name - Pertiwi or "mother earth". The size, dimensions and potential uses of her breasts continue to dominate in physical descriptions of Iin. She has 'a pair of festival carnival balloons on her chest which always wobble nervously threatening to explode as they cry out for liberation a la *glasnost perestroika* but which are firmly secured in their coconut-shell cages as decreed by the Department of Religion and the command for the Restoration of Security and Public Order'.[1] (DU, 23) When she joins the guerrilla unit her male colleagues give her the nickname of "Sri Kendi", a pun on her Srikandi-like military prowess and the water-pot (*kendi*) shape of her breasts.

The magnificence and nurturing potential of Iin's breasts is set against the powerlessness and absurdity of the male sexual organ. Although she initially wishes she were born with a 'secret talisman' (*jimat anu rahasia*, DU, 5), this is soon superseded by the realisation that her breasts are potentially much more powerful than 'the weapon God gave to men' (*senapan hadiah Tuhan*, DU, 37). How insignificant is the 'bird in the lap' (*burung di pangkuan*, DU, 77) of the male of the species compared to the 'fruit on the chest' (*buah-buah di dada*, DU, 77-8) of the female.

However, the colonial legacy of the nation precludes any possibility of a recuperative "maternalising" gesture. The loss of innocence of the nation is symbolised by two incidents during the Revolution: the cold-blooded killing by Pertiwi of a Gurka soldier, and her rape by Dutch soldiers - what Kanneh (1995, 347) calls 'the familiar discourse of rape between coloniser and the colonised country'. Not only is she no longer a virgin, but her hymen has been destroyed in a most brutal and violent manner. It is as if she has lost her virginity twice. She is spoiled, destined never to properly fulfil her role as life-giver and nurturer.

Iin's attempts to rationalise her killing of the soldier on humanitarian grounds - better to kill him quickly than let him continue to suffer and die an

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[1] sepasang balon festival karnaval di dada yang selalu saja bergoyang gelisah mengancam meledak memekikkan hasrat kemerdekaan *glasnost perestroika* tetapi masih terkurung tempurung-tempurung peraturan Departemen Agama dan Bakorstanasda

agonising death - are basically futile; from this point on she has to come to terms with the existence within her of both Durga and Umayi, and all that this duality implies. After being raped, and languishing in a cell until the transfer of sovereignty, Iin 'has no choice' (*tiada jalan lain*, DU, 66) but to become a prostitute and to expand even further the degree to which she engages in subterfuge, duplicity and manipulation.

The maternalising gesture is also abrogated by Iin's refusal to give in to her biology and have children. For post-revolutionary Iin, child-bearing is synonymous with the outdated view that woman's place is the kitchen, well and bedroom. In her more vulnerable moments, she confronts the fact that the Durga that resides within her also precludes the possibility of her fully realising her maternal, nurturing function.

Durga Umayi thus manifests what Boehmer (1993, 274) calls the 'central contradiction' of post-colonial nationalist narrative:

> It cannot bring what it promises, a completely united and unifying history, an absolute unity with the national body.

Privileging the post-colonial perspective

The cultural materialist readings which I undertook in chapters two and three sought to establish links between these texts and the social and cultural context in which they were written. This entailed an analysis of critical response to the novels in Indonesia, by the audience for whom they were written, as well as situating them within the framework of Indonesian literary ideology in the period 1980-1995. What those readings highlighted were the 'complex affiliations' between the texts, their authors, specific periods of twentieth century Indonesian history and Indonesian literary debates.

My readings in this chapter have foregrounded other meanings. Those meanings are inherent in the texts but, while related to the authors' experiences, may not have been consciously invoked by them. Just as the postmodernist readings in chapter five illustrated different dimensions of the texts,

and different ways of looking at them, so too are there elements of Pramoedya's and Mangunwijaya's texts that directly address post-colonial concerns, and so enable them to be viewed as post-colonial novels. This type of reading privileges those aspects of the texts that link them to a wider critical discourse.

CONCLUSION

The literary climate in Indonesia in the period 1980-1995 was characterised by a circularity of literary debates, the most common of which was the question of committed art and the possibility of universalism in literature. The involvement of politics in literature frequently featured in literary discussions, both from the point of view of the influence of the current political regime on the very act of creative writing and the extent to which individual works should be read as political statements. Lying behind these debates was the growth of an anti-realist literature, claiming its place alongside the continuing evolution of realism as the basis of the modern Indonesian novel. The period was also marked by a revitalised interest in regional traditions. These were incorporated into theatrical productions and literary works in ways which sometimes served the purposes of the New Order government's need for harmony and stability and sometimes represented a challenge to those very policies.

The three writers under examination in this thesis represent various points on both the realist - anti-realist continuum and the nationalist - neo-regionalist continuum. Pramoedya Ananta Toer's fiction falls at the very end of both: it is realist and it is nationalist. Mangunwijaya's writing reflects a recognisable reality - the Indonesian nation - while incorporating some elements of experimentation, fantasy and the *wayang* tradition. Putu Wijaya's writing is the very antithesis of Pramoedya's: it is fantastical and non-directional, and he blends this with liberal borrowings from Javanese and Balinese traditions.

While neo-regionalism is a defining feature of some of the work of Wijaya and Mangunwijaya, they incorporate the *wayang* into their work in quite different ways. Mangunwijaya weaves *wayang* references and analogies into a largely realist discourse, whereas Wijaya takes considerable licence with the *Mahabharata* in his fantastical and discursive narratives. By contrast, the narrative of the "Buru quartet" contains no trace of the regional traditions which are appropriated by Mangunwijaya and Wijaya. The quartet is written in the best traditions of realism, reflecting Pramoedya's commitment to the modernist project and his rejection of many elements of "feudal" regional cultures which he regards as inimical to the progress of his people.

Diverse in background, age and religious affiliations, these three writers are still among those most frequently discussed at Indonesian literary symposia and seminars. Pramoedya, now in his seventies, comes from a *priyayi* family committed to the values of the Revolution, yet he was ultimately let down by the failure of the Revolution to deliver real change. He is inspired by his vision of a truly independent Indonesia and his passion for history, and rejects the Javanese traditions of his childhood. Mangunwijaya, a Javanese Catholic priest aged 69 when he died in 1999, drew inspiration from his commitment to improve the welfare of the "little people" left behind in the New Order's obsession with national development. Despite his internationalist outlook, his Javanese roots are still reflected in much of his writing, both fiction and non-fiction. Wijaya, in his fifties, is a Balinese who has lived in Jakarta for many years. His work eclectically reflects influences from Javanese and American ideas as well as his native Balinese culture.

While the works of these writers display the constitutive elements of the literary debates of the period, my purpose in this thesis has been to show that they can also be concretised in other, equally valid ways. In order to demonstrate this I have engaged with reader-response theory, which maintains that it is the reader who produces the meaning of a text and that a given text can therefore be polyvalent: it can have a plurality of equally "valid" meanings. In particular, I have drawn upon

the model proposed by Fish, which asserts that it is the interpretive strategy of the given reader that determines the meaning of the text to which it is applied, and I have situated myself as a "given reader".

However, I have not argued for a totally deconstructive approach, which would afford me, as the reader, *carte blanche* to determine a text's meaning(s). I have identified certain limits to interpretation. Drawing on Easthope, Belsey and Eco, I argue that an informed reader will recognise limitations imposed by the text on the types of reading undertaken. As such I have chosen to apply interpretive strategies that emerge through cultural materialism, postmodernism and/or post-colonialism. My readings illustrate that each reading strategy privileges different features of a text.

The final shape of my readings was constrained not only by the texts themselves but also, less overtly, by the authorial voice. Despite the assertions of theorists like Fish and, more radically, Derrida, that the author relinquishes his/her hold on the text once it is surrendered for publication, I found that my reader-self could never completely silence the voice of the author. As suggested in the contextualised readings in chapters two to four, I consider that the authorial voice frequently speaks very clearly in these novels. As a reader who is familiar with that authorial voice, I cannot altogether shut it out when attempting an "extra-contextual" reading.

In Pramoedya's novels, the authorial voice is heard nowhere more clearly than in those passages where Minke is wrestling with his Javanese heritage, especially his interactions with his mother. While I distance myself from critics like Keeler who claims that Minke's mother's exhortations are unconvincing, because Pramoedya himself doesn't believe them[1], it is nonetheless difficult to detach my reader-self from the knowledge that Pramoedya's rejection of his Javanese heritage is much more unequivocal than Minke's and that therefore he would be completely at odds with post-colonial critics like Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1972, 16) who claim that

[1] Conveyed in personal correspondence with Keith Foulcher

rejecting one's mother tongue and its associated diminishes one's cultural self-identity. Nor would Pramoedya himself concur with Memmi's assertions about the evils of colonial education; Pramoedya had nothing but praise for the Dutch education he received. But, authorial presence notwithstanding, I still maintain that Minke's displacement in the novels can be read as a result of his Dutch education, which set him apart from his peers and did in fact, as Memmi says (1965, 105), teach him a history which was 'not his own'.

Similarly, while reading *Burung-burung manyar* for its post-colonial meanings, one often "hears" Mangunwijaya's own conviction that decolonisation should be a process of rejecting colonisation but not necessarily rejecting the Dutch. He was fond of paraphrasing Soekarno, 'Hate capitalism, hate colonialism, but don't hate the Dutch'. (Mangunwijaya 1994, 312) While the novel does invite a reading of Teto's intentional hybridity as being contestatory, my reader-self suspects that Mangunwijaya himself would view it as less of a political statement and more of a contribution to a richly heterogeneous "post-Indonesian" condition.

Because his novels are interrogative, rather than declarative or imperative, Wijaya's voice is present in his novels in a more mediated form. However, that voice is undeniably present, because the questions Wijaya poses in his novels are also those he poses in his essays and interviews about the quest, epistemological or ontological, to glean some meaning out of human existence.

It is not that I am now claiming that "authorial intention" must figure as an overarching element of the reading process. I aim rather to suggest that, certainly in these novels, the author's presence, and my knowledge of the author (part of my inevitable "reading baggage") casts a shadow over my "extra-contextual" readings without, however, diminishing the validity of those readings. My claim for valid extra-contextual readings remain; I simply want here to point out that once we have taken the trouble to get to know the author, it is difficult to ask him to go away.

This thesis has demonstrated that these novels are both rooted in a recognisable Indonesian context and cognisable from outside that context. They

"belong" both to an Indonesian literary tradition and to a broader international tradition. Their "meanings" do not depend utterly upon authorial intention nor upon the formal features of the text. They do have a "life of their own", a life construed in large part by the interpretive strategy of the reader.

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Bibliographical note:
In order to reduce annotation to the absolute minimum, the following procedures have been adopted:

All references to and quotes from the twelve novels under discussion have been identified in the text by bracketed inserts containing an abbreviated title and the relevant page number(s), eg (K, 67). The abbreviations used and the works to which they refer are as follows:

BM *Bumi manusia* Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 1980.
ASB *Anak semua bangsa* Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 1980.
JL *Jejak langkah* Kuala Lumpur: Wira Karya, 1985.
RK *Rumah kaca* Jakarta: Hasta Mitra, 1988.
BBM *Burung-burung manyar*. Jakarta: Djambatan, 1981.
DU *Durga Umayi*. Jakarta: Grafiti, 1991.
BBR *Burung-burung rantau.* Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1993.
S *Sobat* Jakarta: Penerbit Sinar Harapan, 1981.
P *Perang* Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1990.
T *Teror* Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya, 1991.
K *Kroco* Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1995.
BP *Byarpet* Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1995.

All references to and quotations from secondary literature have been identified in the text by bracketed inserts containing the author's surname, the original year of publication and, where necessary, the relevant page number(s) of the edition used, eg (Wild 1988, 211). Full details of the studies concerned are to be found below.

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